

What (and I cannot stress this enough) the fuck

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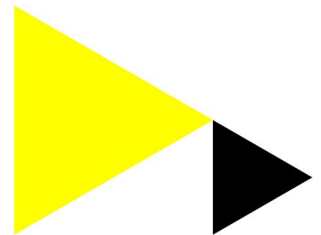
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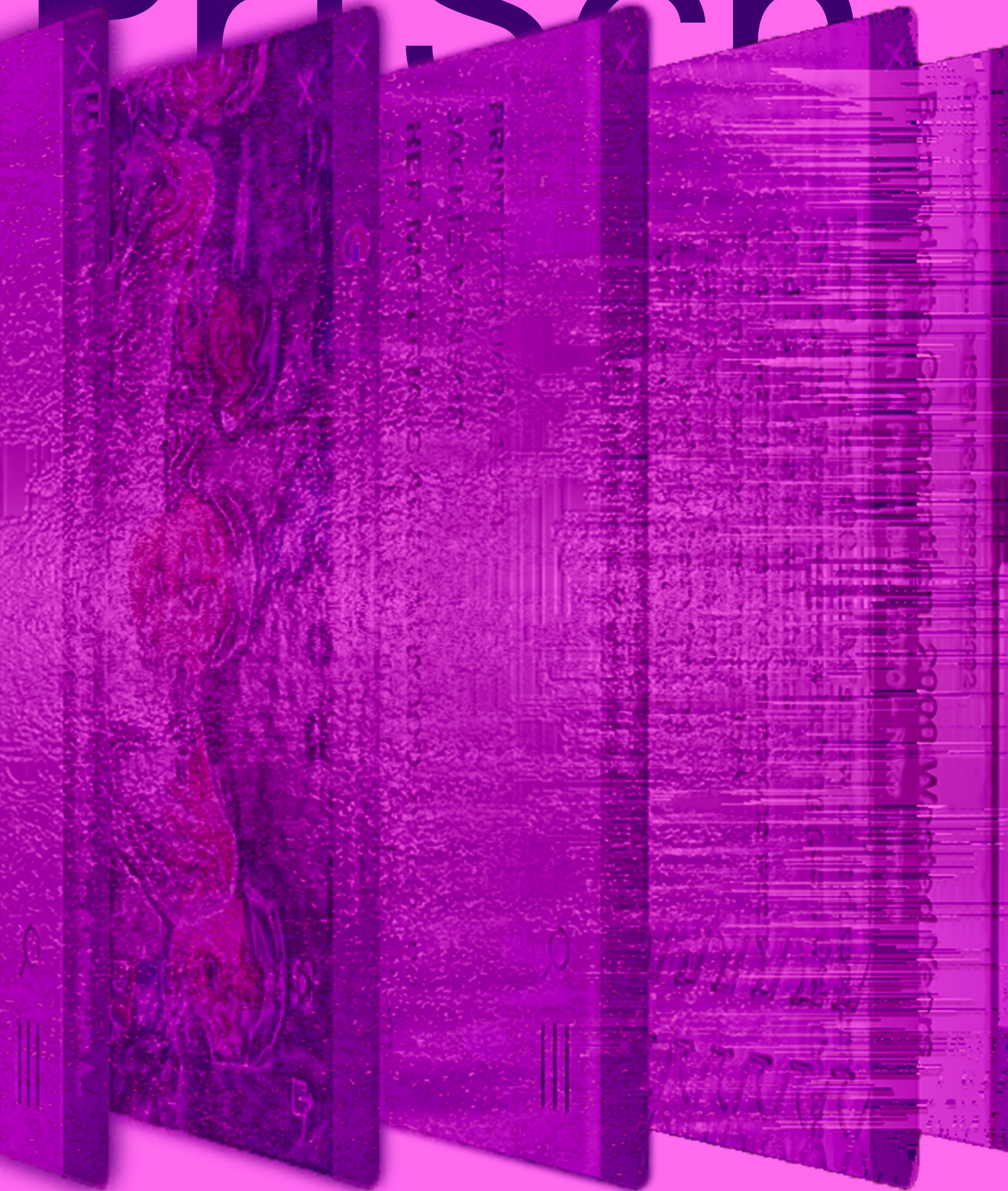
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Print + Screen



The Lazy Art of Screenshot

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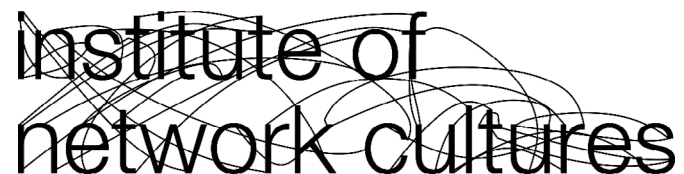
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Introduction

Dunja Nešović

A prelude to this publication was the INC longform I published in early 2022 called ‘No Shot Like Screenshot: Banal, Sublime, Dangerous’.¹ The essay had a theoretical goal of identifying the main parameters of this image, medium and image-making practice that situate it within networked, digital environments most of us inhabit on a daily basis. Due to its obviousness, banality, versatility and omnipresence, the screenshot presents itself as something relatively difficult to pinpoint—especially without falling into a trap of defining it against other image-making media. Somewhat achieving that goal, the screenshot was captured and theoretically reiterated through its several facets:

As a poor and free image; a surveilling tool for internet users; an aesthetic instrument for artists and creators; an archiving practice serving future digital nostalgias and historical narratives; an uncanny representation; a digital object that creates and affirms communal values and experiences; and a puncture to established space and time dynamics. However, this list is incomplete and calls for more actions of ‘looking at, rather than looking through’ screenshots, as Paul Frosh proclaims.²

To address this, and to honor the networked character of the screenshot, artists, web-surfers, designers, writers, scholars (and all of those who recognized themselves as eligible to talk about and work with the screenshot) were invited to provide their own perspectives—alongside the perspective of their screens—on the subject. Opening a call for contributions for this publication was as vague and all-encompassing as the screenshot itself. With minimal restrictions to what can be submitted, we didn’t know what exactly we would be able to expect from the contributors as we wanted to pay respect to the multifaceted screenshotting practice with this uncertainty.

The attribute ‘lazy’ in the title of this publication refers to the technological easiness (as well as restrictiveness) of screenshotting that doesn’t demand any applied creative or visual skills from so-called shooters. Instead, they are free to lazily notice and appropriate others’ (or in fact, *no one’s*) imagery that is readily displayed on the screen. By emphasizing the technical ‘laziness’ we aimed to zoom in on the other specificities of the screenshot that make this image, medium and image-making practice unique to our ubiquitously screened realities. However, as you will witness later on, even this aspect is susceptible to disputation, subversion and conceptual layering.

As the screenshot travels through networks and is stored away safely in the depths of our hard drives or cloud depositories, a collection of written and visual works of *PrtScn: The Lazy Art of Screenshot* unpacks these digital movements, freezes and many points (and pixels) in between. Some of the perspectives such as personal, artistic, communal, surveillant, archival, disruptive, theoretical and political can be delineated within the contributions, but their overlaps are so evident that clustering them under different sections seemed reductive and redundant.

Therefore, in an attempt to simulate a vast sphere of the internet before we became trapped in the predetermined scrolls designed by our favorite digital overlords, this publication imagines you, a reader, as a surfer. No table of contents, no categorizations, no terms of use. Use bookmarks to label the pages you want to come back to easily, highlight important parts, and even though we don’t condone the destruction of books, nobody will know if you decide to cut a paper out, put it on your desktop, in a file or folder or re-integrate it into your own zine or collage. And of course, for those of you with digital copies... screenshot away!

Flipping (or scrolling) through this zine you might detect some sort of predetermined, associative order, you might recognize similarities and discrepancies amongst the works, you might even think “I could’ve done that!” Good. Contemporary screenshot culture will continue to be enriched and enlarged with every new thought, practice or (un)finished work that is provoked by what is already on display. Underestimating, taking for granted and overlooking something just because it is mundane and (seemingly) easy has almost always proved itself to be a dangerous strategy. Therefore, join us in unearthing what is already visible on the surface.

Screenshot

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A **screenshot**, also known as **screen capture** or **screen grab**, is a digital image that shows the contents of a computer display. A screenshot is created by the operating system or software running on the device powering the display.

but also,

screenshot is something else entirely; several things in fact: the screenshot is a kind of document, a remediated photograph, and a mode of witnessing and poetic world disclosure.

the screenshot is the selfie of the device.

it is a copy of the image currently appearing on the computer;

copy of an irretrievably lost constellation or situation on the screen. The screenshot is possibly the only image of a thing that could be confused with it, at least for a short time. Robbed of the operativity of the interface image, the screenshot, like a photo-

Ironically what screenshots captured here was not **stillness** but interaction,

archive constantly in motion.

American scholar, in such images we recognize ourselves ‘but also something other than ourselves; or rather, still ourselves – but ourselves complicated, enmeshed, othered’. In the spirit of Heidegger, Cloninger states that the

screenshots were framed as **haunting**.

a ‘technological uncanny’,

a death mask.

, **they play** with expected boundaries of digital time and space.

show the rare, the obvious, and the unbelievable.

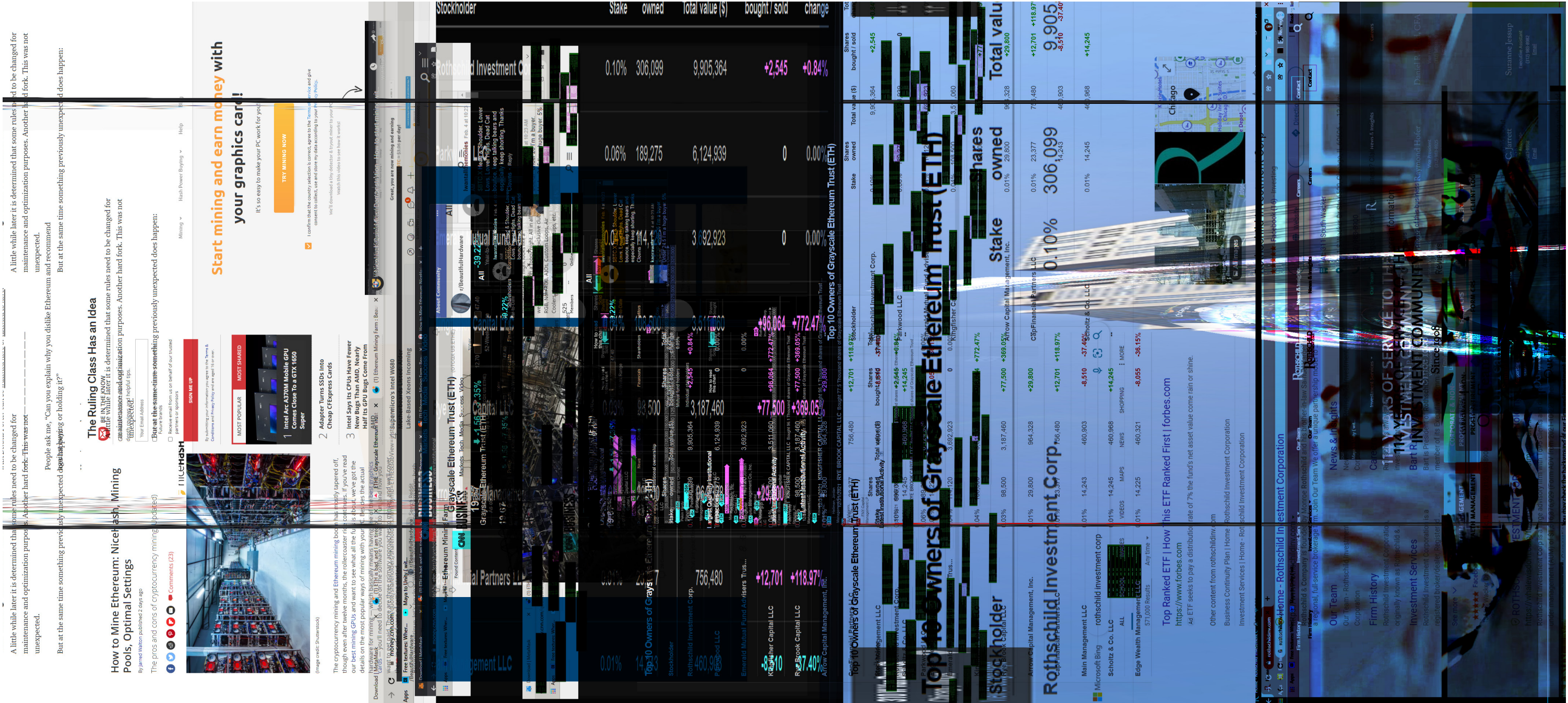
restoring the significance of the human gaze

for rethinking perception as unfixed, nonlinear, embodied, and mobile.

¹ Dunja Nešović, ‘No Shot Like Screenshot: Banal, Sublime, Dangerous’, *Institute of Network Cultures Longform*, 19 January 2022, <https://networkcultures.org/longform/2022/01/19/no-shot-like-screenshot-banal-sublime-and-dangerous/>.

² Paul Frosh, *The Poetics of Digital Media*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 2018.

In addition to its print edition, *PrtScn: The Lazy Art of Screenshot* features a webbased collection of moving-image works that worked with the screenshot. You can visit it [here](#).



Cover work: The Ruling Class Has an Idea

F.C. Zuke

The Ruling Class Has an Idea is a long vertorama comprised of screenshots captured by someone researching the current NFT craze. The work is meant to be scrolled through by viewers from top to bottom. A narrative emerges through this form of viewing as the researcher follows links to discover those who might gain the most from the NFT sensation. Each zine cover features a segment of the entire work. Visit the full work [here](#).

The Screenshooter

César Escudero Andaluz

We cannot orient ourselves in the world without first creating an image of it. Thus it makes no sense to prohibit image creation.
Vilém Flusser, A New Imagination

The computer desktop is governed by images, metaphors and visual elements mediators between the world of humans and the world of bits of information. The first of these worlds transmits information biologically, through electrical and chemical signals and by various combinations of human senses. The second is electronic and operates numbers and symbols through different interface combinations. The computer metaphor provides a comprehensive understanding of the desktop world, it uses real-world experience with the use of folders, files, documents and actions such as cut, copy-paste, drag, etc., connecting functionality and representation.¹ These representations of the real-world allow for the decoding of messages obtained from new objects.²

The Computer metaphor is based on the knowledge gained from previous experiences, this knowledge becomes on learning allowing the comprehension of new environments directly connected with the cognitive, emotional and subjective. This mental structure is part of human nature, but also a necessary model to explain and make more predictable the intuitive uses of computers. Therefore the interface metaphor opens up this mental development model, it helps to retain memory in the symbolic world that represents them.³ For this reason, computing and reality seem to have the same level of significance. In the

works of Josep M. Domenech Català, the interface externalizes the imaginary dimension of images materializing intuitions, creating predictable environments where users interact with the operating system and programs easily.⁴

DESKTOP IS

The graphical user interface (GUI) as we know it does not stem from an aesthetic tradition, but from an engineering tradition that has paradoxically tried to get rid of it. Until recently it has largely been understood in technical terms and developed in engineering laboratories.⁵

In artistic practices, desktops become a potential medium for aesthetical and critical expression due to their capacity to shape and interfere with users' behaviors. In October 1997, the net-artist Alexei Shulgin proposed DESKTOP IS,⁶ the first international exhibition online of computer desktops. Shulgin gave the opportunity to artists around the world to participate in this event by sending a screenshot of their personal desktop. Shulgin was the first to establish the computer desktop aesthetic as an important inflection point on digital art. It could be just the first desktops exhibition, but the difference was that he added a dogmatic text where he explained important theoretical, ideological, symbolic and critical issues attached to the computer desktop environment:

Desktop is the main element of a human - machine interface
Desktop is your window to the digital world
Desktop is your first step into virtual reality
Desktop is a reflection of your individuality
Desktop is your everyday visual environment

4 Josep M. Català Domènech, 'La Rebelión de la Mirada'.
5 Søren Pold, 'Interface Realisms: The Interface as Aesthetic Form', Postmodern Culture 15, no. 2 (2005). <http://pmc.iath.virginia.edu/issue.105/15.2pold.html>.
6 Alexei Shulgin, DESKTOP IS, <http://www.easylife.org/desktop/>.

Desktop is an extension of your organs
Desktop is the face of your computer
Desktop is your everyday torture and joy
Desktop is your own little masterpiece
Desktop is your castle
Desktop is a seducer
Desktop is a reliever
Desktop is your enemy
Desktop is your friend
Desktop is a psychoanalyst
Desktop is your little helper
Desktop is your link to other people
Desktop is a device for meditation
Desktop is the membrane that mediates transactions between client and server
Desktop is a substitute for so many other things
Desktop is a question
Desktop is the answer

The computer desktop is a visual environment where mathematical operations are transformed into aesthetic ones and vice versa - in this complex action, users interact as passive observers of the interface metaphor.⁷ Shulgin not only pointed out the characteristics relating to the functional and philosophical ideas of human-computer interaction (HCI) and the organization of the desktop space, but also laid the foundations for considering the desktop as a medium for artistic creation and criticism. According to Steven Johnson, the Computer Desktop modifies not only our perception of the dataspace, but also our perception of the real-world environment. 'In the age of information, the metaphor we use to comprehend all those zeros and ones are as central, and as meaningful, as the cathedrals of the Middle Ages.'⁸

7 First citation: Interpassivity: Pfaller, Robert, Illusionen der Anderen, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2003. Second Citation: Slavoj Žižek 'Cyberspace, or, How to Traverse the Fantasy in the Age of the Retreat of the Big Other', Public Culture, volume 10 issue 3, (1998).
8 Steven Johnson, Interface Culture: How New Technology Transforms the Way We Create and Communicate, Harper San Francisco, 1997, p. 45.

File_món

We are not facing reality, we face another representation of the reality, so realistic that we usually confuse it. The same is happening in the space limited by frames, I mean, the computer screen reflecting lights, and where the virtual culture is not another representation of the reality is a reality itself. 'The illiterate of the future will not be the inexperienced writer, but will be unaware of the picture.'⁹ Within the same conceptual thought, the project *File_món*¹⁰ (2010-2020) consist of a series of images generated on the computer desktop through the distribution of icons and files arranged over images. *File_món* uses physical world experience to talk about the over-saturation of events, the difficulty of accessing information, the lack of affinity between the viewer and the reference, and the insensitivity towards disasters.

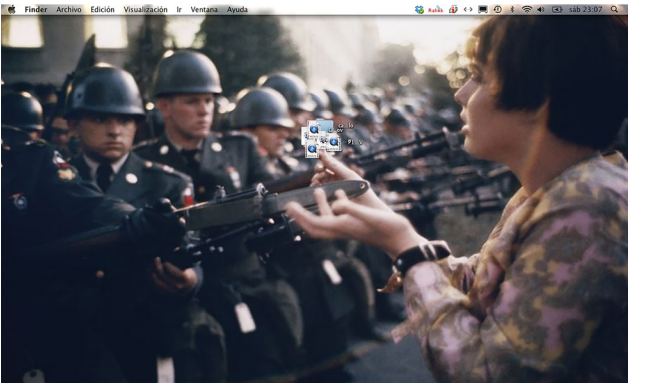


Fig. 1: Screen shot 2013-06-01 at 23.07.49

Its methodology consists of capturing images from mass media: the internet, newspapers, webs, blogs, social networks, etc. These found images are incorporated into the wallpaper of the computer desktop and modified through the overlapping and distributing of desktop elements and icons.

9 Walter Benjamin, trans. José Muñoz Millanes, Sobre la Fotografía, Valencia: Pre-textos, 2008, p. 12.
10 César Escudero Andaluz, File_món, https://escuderoandaluz.com/2012/08/07/file_mon/.

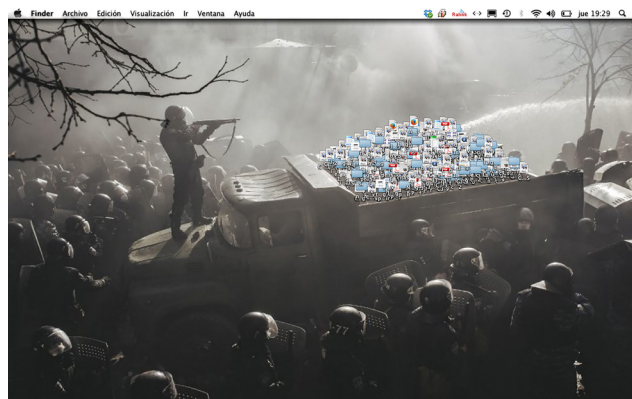


Fig. 2: Screen shot 2014-02-27 at 19.29.40

The significant surface of the image changes by hiding and covering small pieces of information.

The GUI deconstruction is an idea closely connected to this desktop metaphor used by artists to emphasize the interface presence in our lives. *File_món* changes the functionality of the computer desktop, which is used as a canvas for a critical collage, and introduces representations of the physical world connecting emotional experiences with desktop metaphors functionality. *File_món* wonders how to visualize images, what is hidden behind them, but also wonders what is hidden behind the computer metaphor. Who? When? Where? And: why? Also, how was the GUI programmed?

‘We have to examine how media and representational challenge and change our way of perceiving and simultaneously incorporate certain modes of perception in their own technological and material form.’¹¹ Professor of digital aesthetics at Aarhus university Søren Bro Pold made this consideration while taking as reference Walter Benjamin’s sentence ‘The mode of human perception changes historically.’ To him, human perceptions are not only summarized in natural or biological inputs: also historical circumstances and semiotic seeing collaborate in the construction of reality. According to Søren Bro Pold ‘We do not only see the world with our eyes; our seeing is also accomplished and takes effect in a way that is governed by semiotic and material media, which are historical constructions in our reality.’¹²

Historically, the desktop interface with its menus, icons and pointers was implemented in the 70s in Xerox Alto by a group of computer scientists headed by Alan Kay. They combined

11 Søren Pold, ‘The Cybe Extracted from Cybernetic Mentality and its Critics: Ubermorgen.com.’ in Christian Ulrik Andersen and Søren Bro Pold (Eds.), *Interface Criticism, Aesthetics Beyond Buttons*. Aarhus University Press 2011, p. 91-92.

12 Ibid.

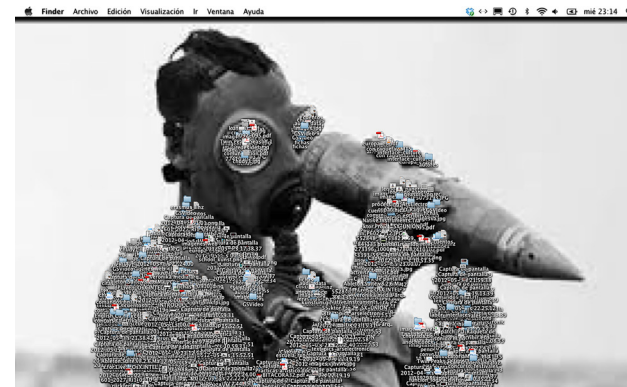


Fig. 4: Screenshot 2012-05-at 23.14.07

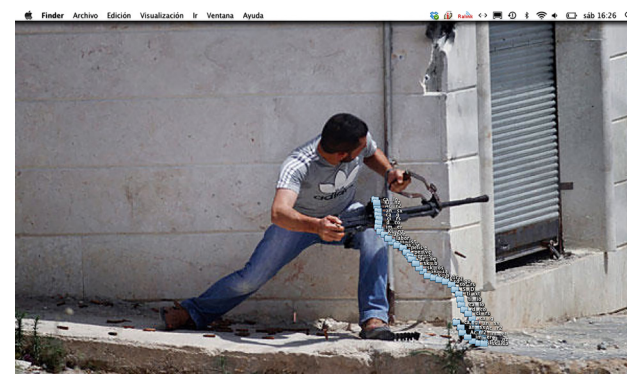


Fig. 5: Screenshot 2013-04-20 at 16.26.20

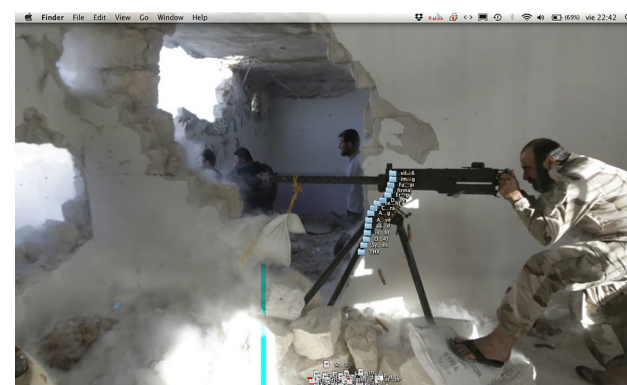
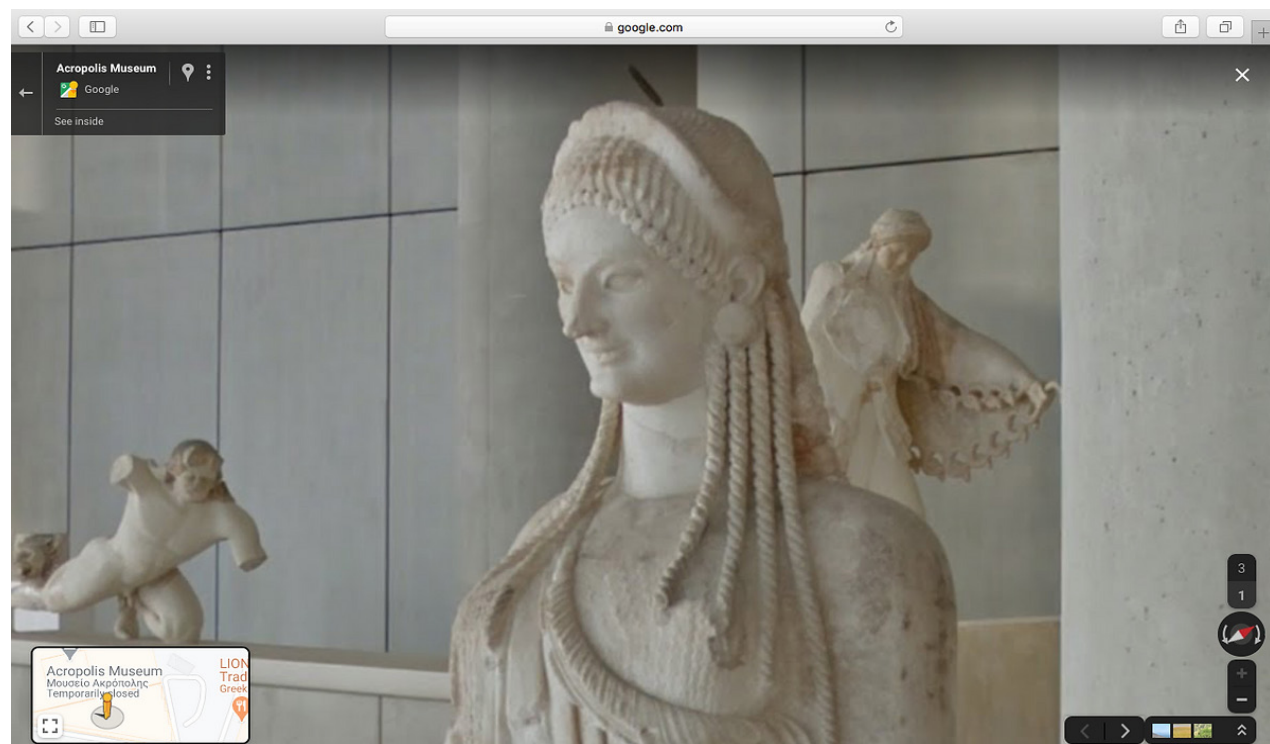


Fig. 6: Screenshot 2016-01-01 at 22.42.06

previous researches such as Vannevar Bush’s, *As We May Think* (1945), Ivan Sutherland’s *Sketchpad* (1963) and Douglas Engelbart’s *oNLine System* (1968) with theories of psychologists such as Jean Piaget, Seymour Papert, and Jerome Bruner.

Kay’s group studied the dynamics of human perception and the role of images and symbols in the construction of complex concepts, in order to make computers accessible to users. As Kay pointed out, ‘doing with images makes symbols.’ But beyond the images and symbols, the computer desktop hides complex concepts, –a fictional universe of image representation, where the computer interface is presented as a control system capable of encode scenes and situations that are no longer decoded.

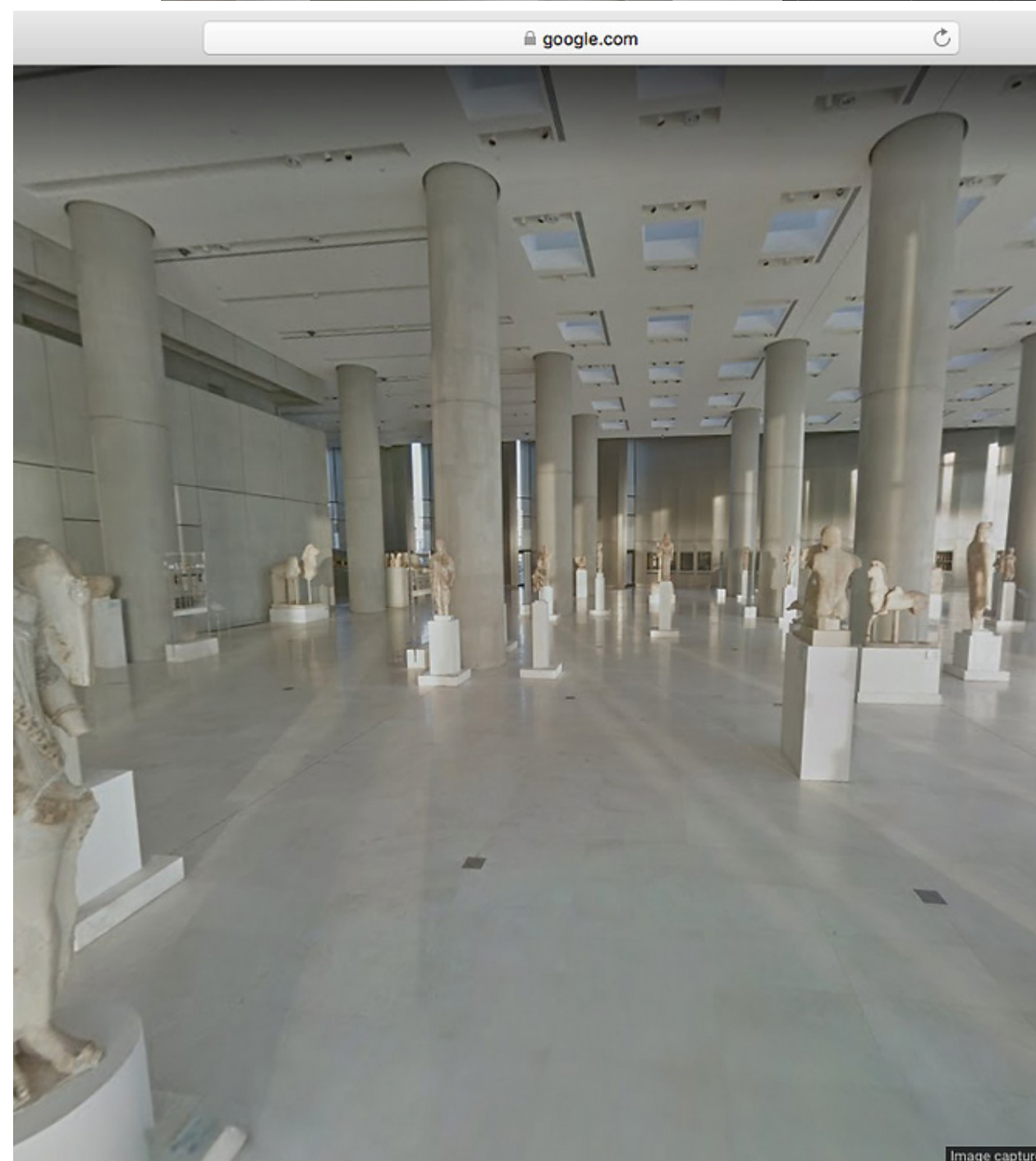
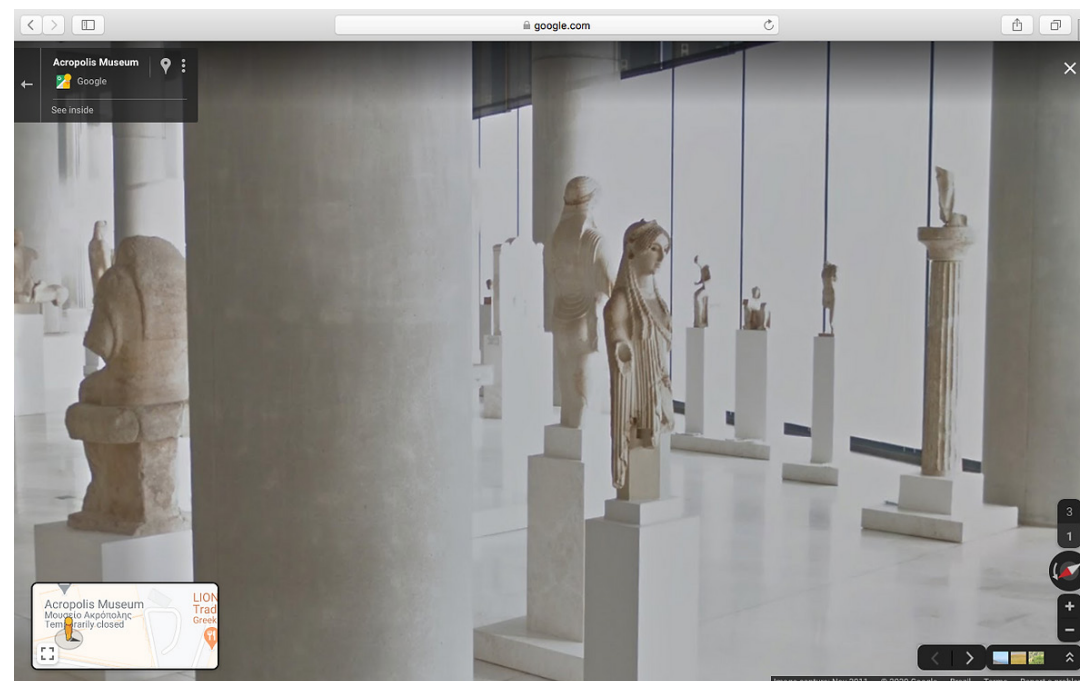


Isolamento no Olimpo, 2020

Nicole Kouts

Isolamento no Olimpo (Isolation at Olympus), is a series of 17 images captured on an online tour through the digital archive of the Acropolis Museum, in Greece, with Google Street View. In this register, available since 2011, the museum is empty on a sunny day. The statues and fragments of statues, which belonged to the Parthenon, temple of the goddess Athena, are alone in a new context completely different from the original. Then, they were transformed into photographic images and relocated on the internet. So, as a screen capture, they became this job. The flow of contemplation turns into circulation, navigation, restlessness: an accumulation of distortions and distractions. They are rearrangements, with their limitations and possibilities of space-time (mythological, museological, digital and artistic) about what life was and what life is.

PrtScn features a selection of images from the series.



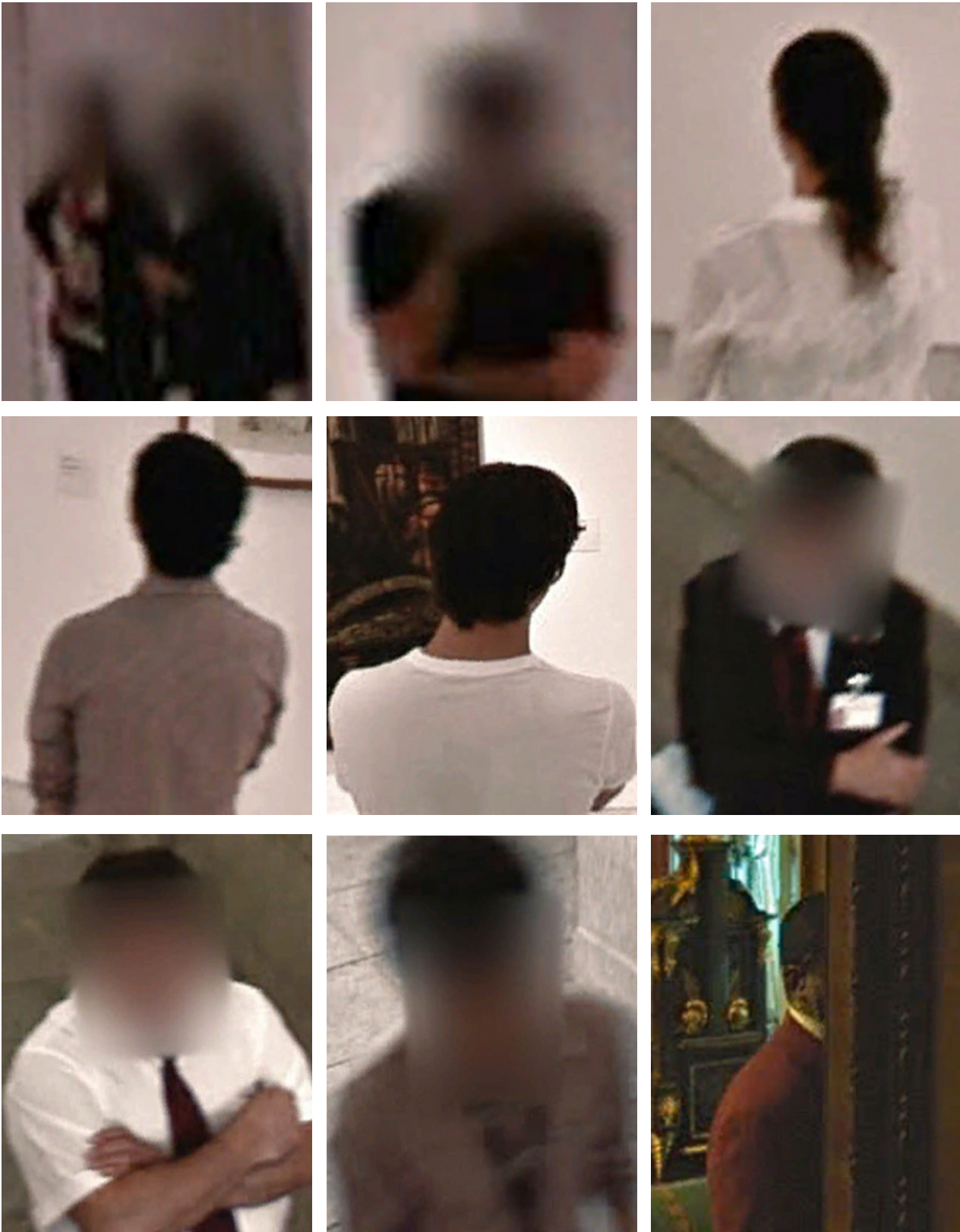
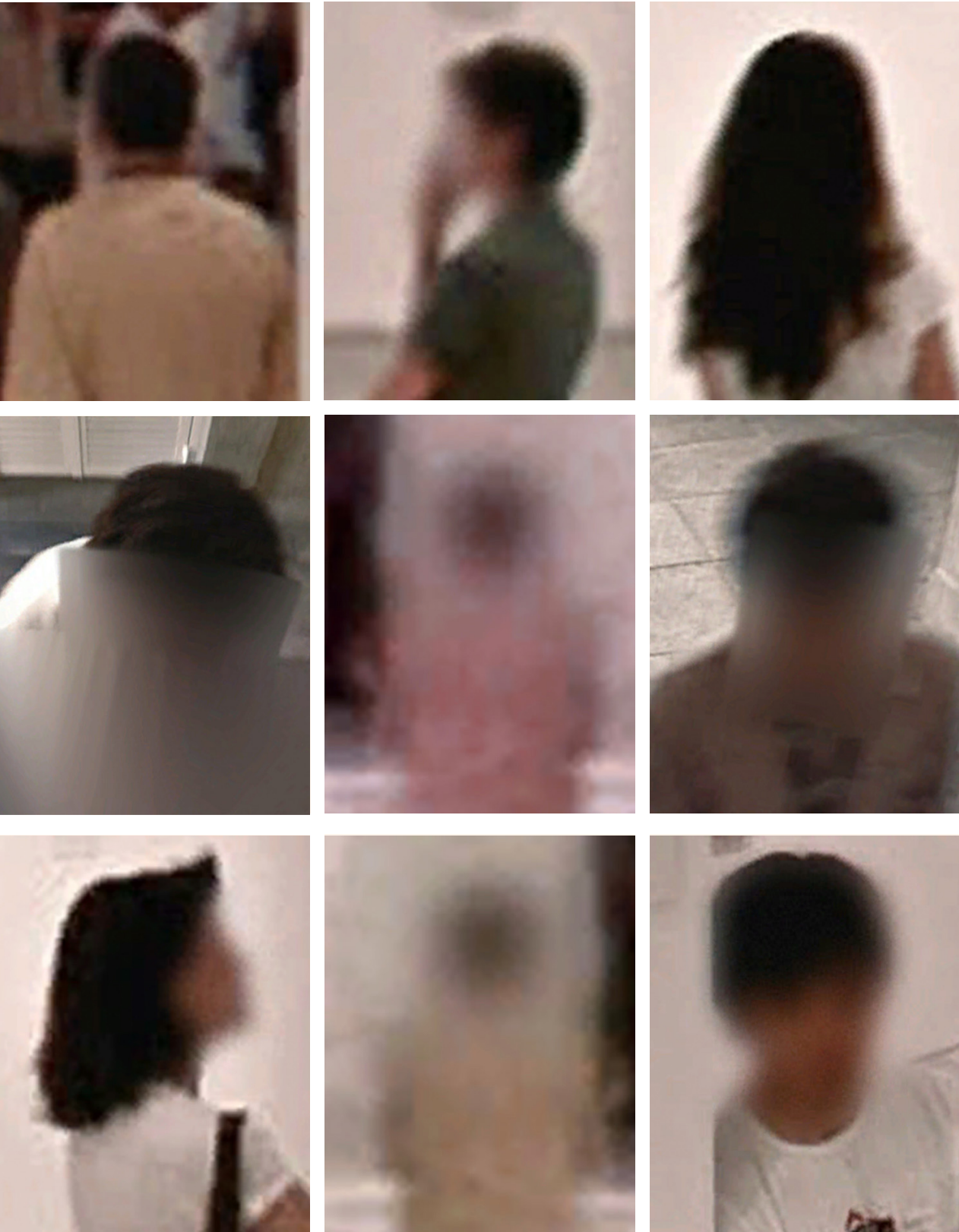
all museum goers look the same

Elisa Bergel Melo

The series *all museum goers look the same* is part of a research project that I developed throughout 2019 visiting museums through Google Earth. I wanted to provide new codes of understanding about what a work of art is and how it can be apprehended from everyday spaces such as the internet, which with the additional information it provides, redefines the sphere of observation.

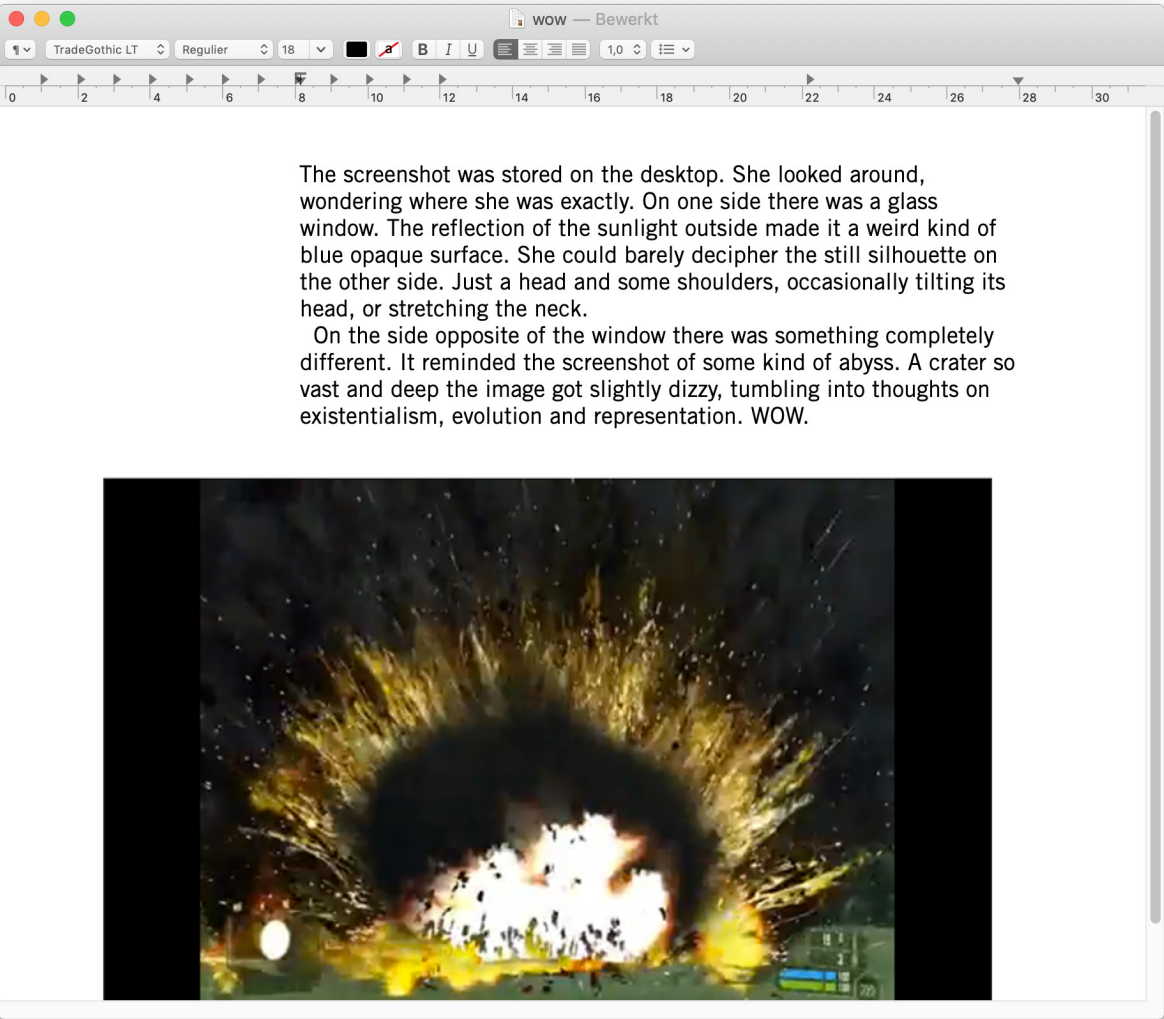
This series presents 20 photographs of museum visitors made with screenshots where they are portrayed observing works of art, the subjects are censored to protect their identity, and at the same time, their impressions of what they observe. This censorship proposes to complete from the imagination a story around the act of going to a museum, while creating a relationship between the one who sees the work of art and the one who sees the portraits from cues such as body language and clothing.

PrtScn features a selection of images from the series.

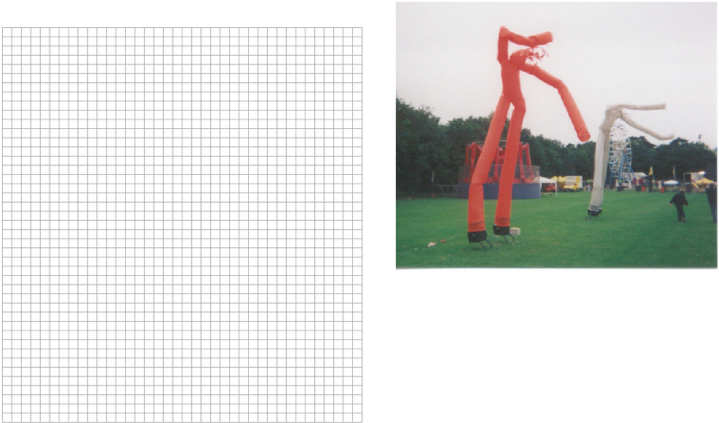


When a screenshot finds herself on a desktop

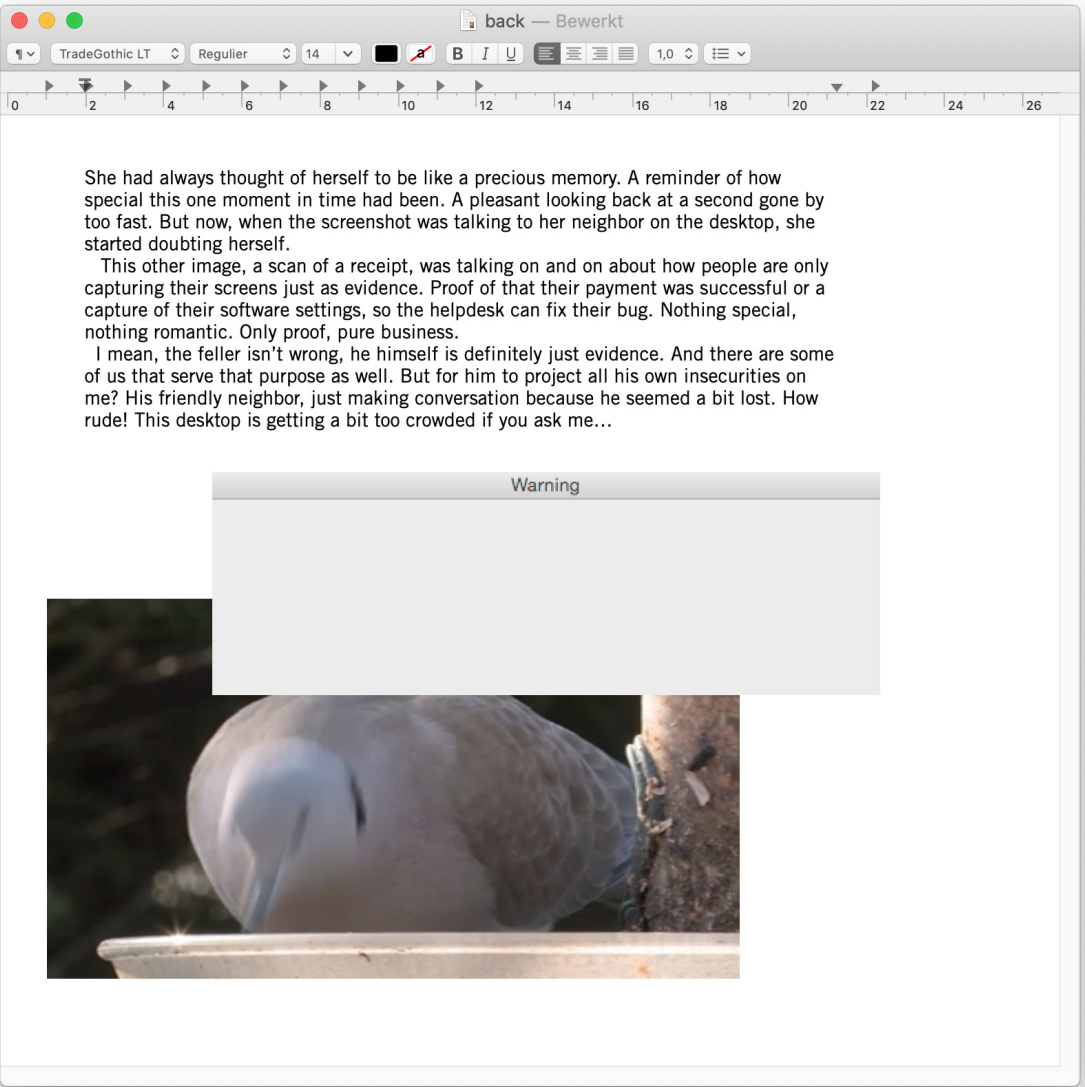
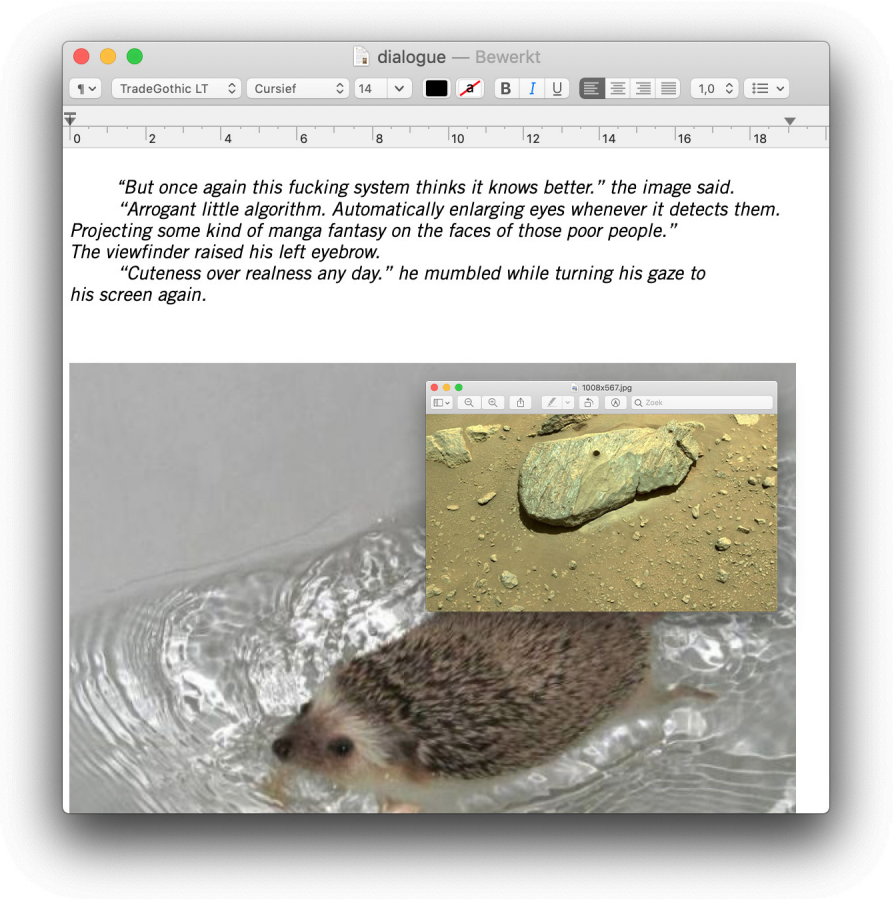
Elki Boerdam

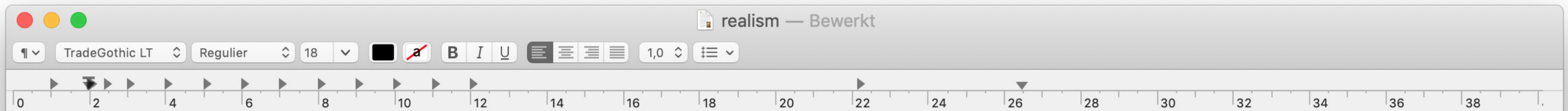


"Have I been here before?" The image felt some familiarity but couldn't really remember. Was she even capable of recalling her own memory?



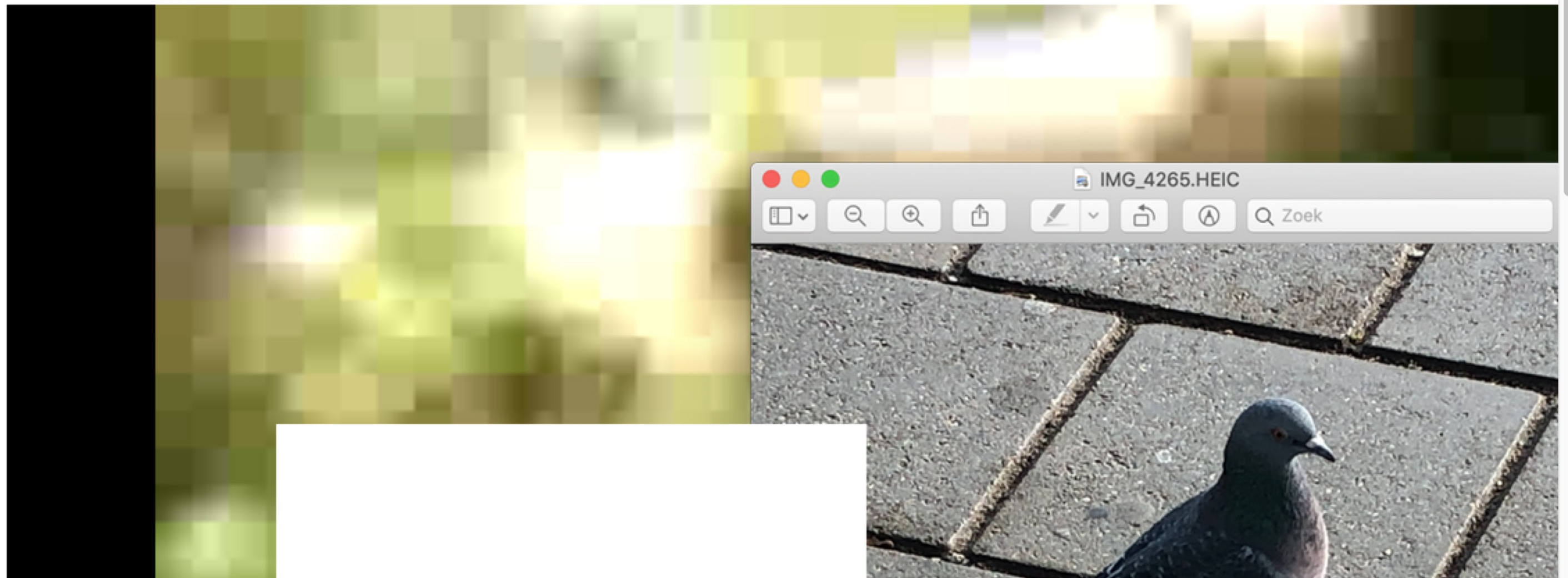
"What is memory without storage?" she asked the clerk at the desk. "When everything seems to bounce and everything reflects? Where nothing stays in one place for more then the blink of an eye?". The clerk stared at her for a moment, then gave her a tiny pamphlet with some instructions and pointed towards a dark corner of the storage facility. "If you get lost, just call the number on the pamphlet. You will be saved immediately".





The screenshot was stored in between photographs. She didn't like it too much, such an arrogant crowd. With their compositions, lighting adjustments, rich history, fancy filters and their realism, the photographs always bullied her with being so digital. I mean, as if she wasn't a print of reality just as much as they were. Maybe not a framed memory of the physical world, whatever that means in this day and age, but surely a capture of life just the same. A copy of a moment in the real.

But the screenshot knew she would never be accepted by the others. Those pompous pictures. So glamorous. Could she ever contain the same amount of imagination? Could she ever be truly like them?

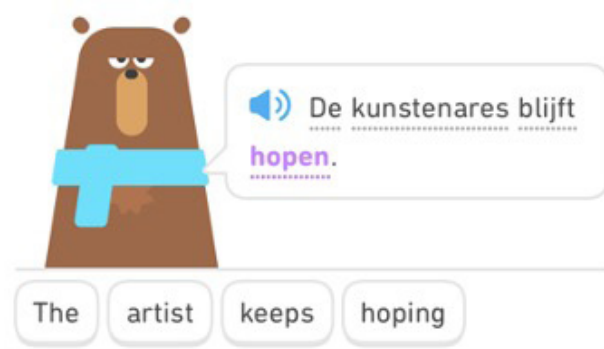


I'm Still Learning, Don't Thank Me

Agnieszka Wodzińska



Translate this sentence



I look through screenshots on my phone and notice that a lot of them are from the app Duolingo. They capture my attempts at learning Dutch and belong to one of two categories: touching or absurd. Together, they form a kaleidoscope of what it is like to learn remotely, haphazardly, noncommittally. I sit in my small apartment, alone, abroad, watching silly characters give me prompts. I study Dutch spelling and sentence structure given to me by an older man who looks like a restaurant owner, a person with purple shoulder-length hair, a child, a grumpy bear. They see me more often than most of my friends do.

The artist keeps hoping, the bear says, and catches me by surprise. I screenshot it. I tell my partner about it. It feels significant for a moment, then we move on. Months later, I come across the screenshot and relive the pleasant sensation of being taken out of a mundane moment of passive learning and into a more activated state. The accidental poetics of the Duolingo bear gave an interesting texture to an otherwise flat encounter.

What does the artist hope for?

- a) funding,
- b) a kind gallerist,
- c) that the mystical snake of the art history canon sheds its skin and slithers into a shape kind enough to accommodate the artist,
- d) other.

For an inexplicable reason, the artist keeps hoping, because something is coming. There is a chance that things will be different.

Jacques Rancière, writing about theater and film, says that 'viewing is the opposite of knowing. [...] To be a spectator is to be separated from the capacity to know and the power to act'.¹ He proposes that spectators should learn from images instead of being seduced by them, wanting 'active participants as opposed to passive voyeurs'.² In a sense, learning on Duolingo is an activity, it requires something from me, making me a participant. But like with a lot of interactions that happen on or through my phone, this one too falls under automatism. It is mechanical, a task, but passive somehow. Until I see something out of the ordinary, something that deserves to be remembered. Then it becomes a communal performance. Me, this app, my phone, and its ability to capture whatever is on the screen. My desire to look back at the images later. My phone's refusal to forget the images I feed it/it feeds me.

Twenty-three dogs are walking to the station. I imagine them as sausage dogs, some with collars and leashes now dragging on the ground. They stroll towards the Amstel station together. They belong in this configuration of little bodies and feet tapping on the pavement and up the stairs onto the platform. Twenty-three dogs can survive almost anything, I think. They are probably very resilient. I envy them for this sense of camaraderie. Twenty-three, no more, no less. It sounds perfect.

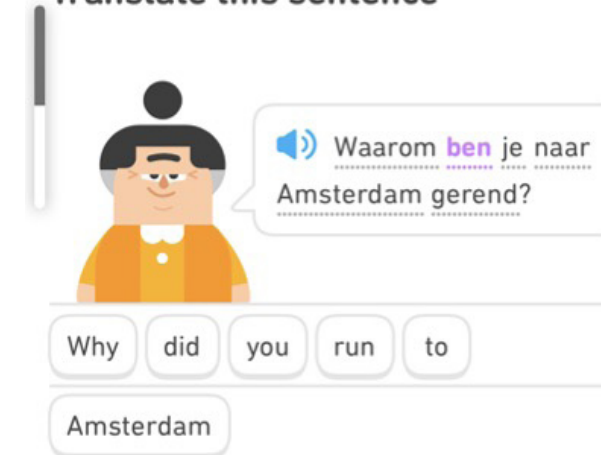
*I always listen to my heart.
Ik luister altijd naar mijn hart.
Zawsze słucham się serca.*

I fumble through this one. But then I picture saying it, exasperated, to a dear friend in a café somewhere. We sit together, drink wine, gesticulate, my friend talks with so much

1 Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott, London: Verso Books, 2009.
2 Rancière 2009.



Translate this sentence



passion I can't help but match it. *I always listen to my heart.* The truth is, I want to listen to it because surely it holds answers to all my questions. But most of the time, I can't tell what it's saying. Maybe it's not talking at all, just working away, and isn't that enough? Why should I expect more from it?

Duolingo and Google, tell me how to feel

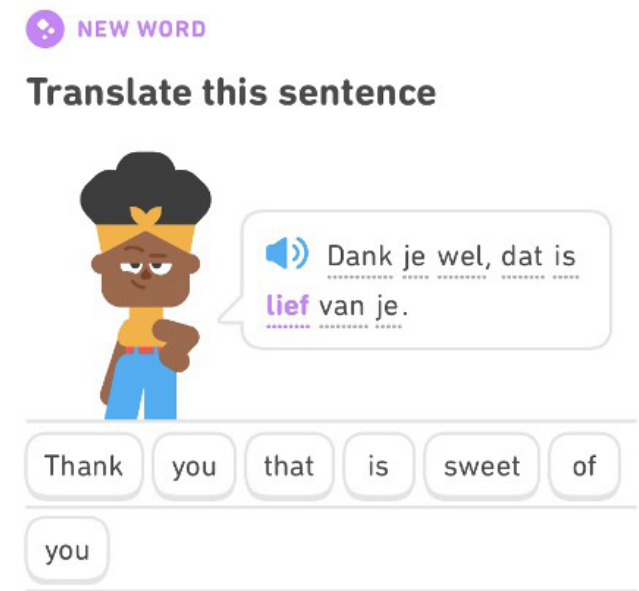
When I listen to my heart it says;
To exalt my soul, and to possess
To exalt my life and burn my flesh,
Roar in their hands with a sharp caress.

I give Google's *Verse by Verse* poetry generator the prompt: 'When I listen to my heart, it says' and let the machine do its work. It writes and I edit, add punctuation, and think about the overall effect. It inspires me for a moment; the word "exalt" excites me because I wouldn't have picked it. The poem is steamy, poignant. I screenshot it on my laptop and look at it later. I think if I read the last line on a yellowed page of a book I would blush. But this glaring blue light of a quatrain is different because its production is random, a hodgepodge, a shot in the dark. I know because I made it. Yet it doesn't feel like it's mine.

Why did I run to Amsterdam? If I listened to my heart, I would know. But I can only guess. I go for a walk to find the answer. A flat stroll down narrow streets, with heavy clouds billowing over me. I like *ontbijtkoek*, cycling, the dunes. I am innocent and a voyeur. I like looking into people's houses in the evening when their light is on and the curtains are open and there is a family having dinner, speaking fluent Dutch I imagine, and missing all the unexpected joys of Dutch on Duolingo.

My screenshots trace the curve of my learning and show awkward encounters with a foreign language. Its friendly animated characters give me just enough validation to keep me on the app. I have to keep going, reach

the next milestone, make it to the top 3. This type of learning is best served in small bites, easy to digest, pocket-sized, non-continuous, non-committal, customizable, user-friendly, addictive, gamified, memefied, mummified. Reduced to its essence but through this process it loses its heart.



Like Claude Cahun’s blouse in that one photograph that says: ‘I’m in training, don’t kiss me,’ I’m still learning, don’t thank me. I can’t receive praise until I hear that jingle at the end of the lesson, then I will allow it. That little flutter of small success, something finished in a sea of things that await my attention.

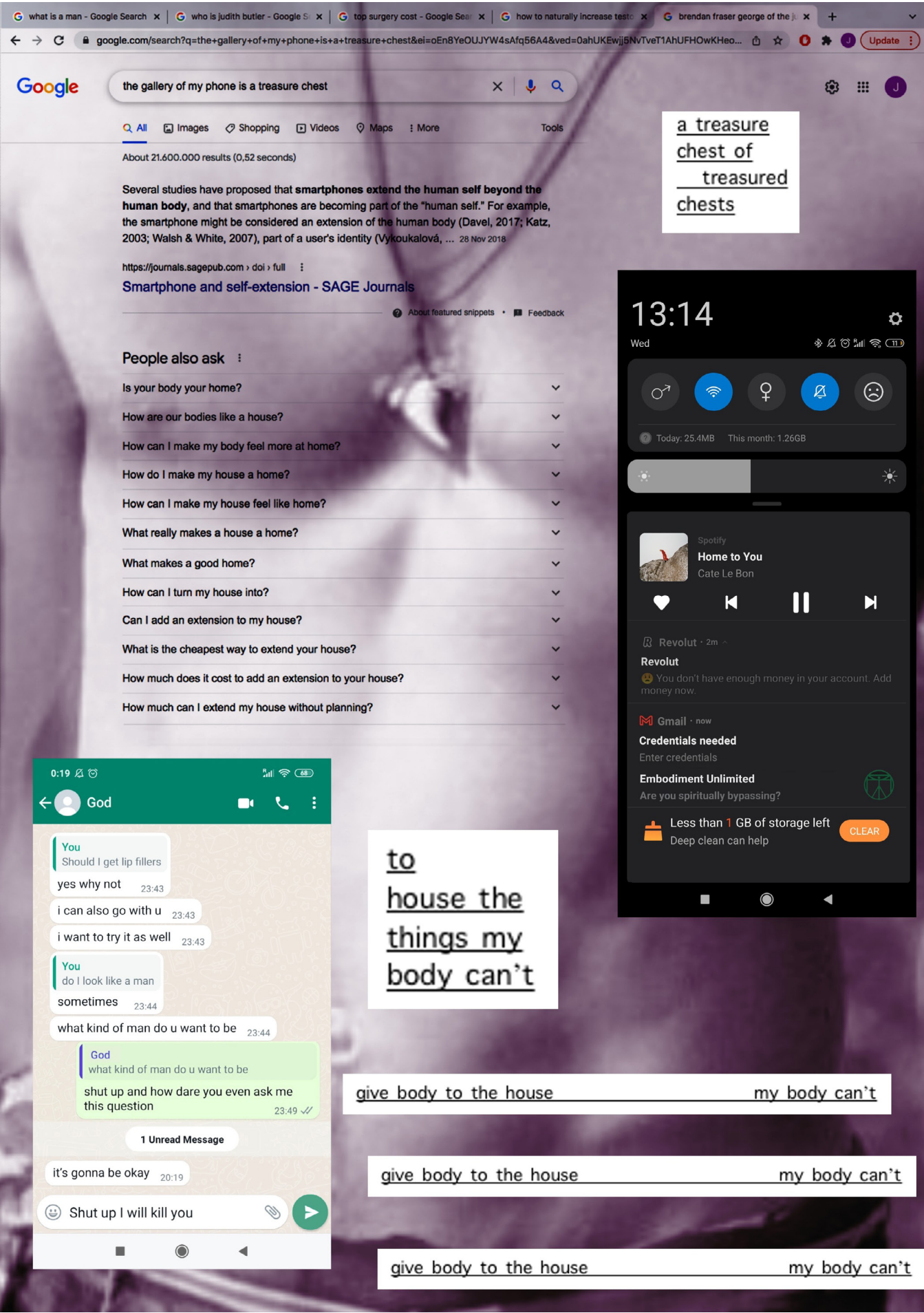
When there is a difficult sentence in a lesson – I mostly struggle with the way sentences in Dutch are structured, the order of things – I take a screenshot of the correct answer that Duolingo gives you. I wait until the same prompt shows up in the lesson and if I am not confident in my answer, I will consult my screenshot. It becomes a precious resource, my own form of spaced repetition. Or is it cheating? I get rid of it afterwards, delete the evidence, but keep the good Duolingo prompts; the funny ones, the usable, quirky, productive, multi-layered ones that allow me to do something with them,

otherwise they are of no use. There is a certain kind of beauty in trying, learning, being not-quite-there yet. The screenshot freezes a moment of learning before it reaches completion. My screenshots humble me.

- The artist:*
- a) keeps hoping and learning,
 - b) keeps an archive of mishaps,
 - c) keeps making meaning out of not-knowing.

I speak to Duolingo, but it is not a conversation. My voice carries layers of influence gathered from my place of birth and the places I’ve lived. Now, it morphs into something else when I try to speak Dutch. It is uncanny. I am an active voyeur, listening to myself speak and saving profound sentences but in the end watching the performance unfolding between my voice, hands, and my phone. It is hard not to be seduced by this cycle of production.

Duolingo’s animated characters are my little oracles who recite cryptic texts over and over. It is poetry, it is profound, it is nothing. An active voyeur searches for meaning through a digitized smoke screen, grabbing whatever is in front. It might take on a shape that intrigues and is malleable enough to make into something interesting. It stays that way until it stops receiving attention. Then it drops its form and blends into other jokes, memes, memos, and memorials on a never-ending camera roll.



Untitled 2

Jessie Connell



Desire to See Everything from Nowhere

Aisha Altenhofen

The images are part of an ongoing project of unedited screenshots taken within the Google Streetview cartographies of malls and stores. Navigating through the commercial architectures of the digital platform and the mall one encounters the surrealist hauntings of multiple temporalities, privacy laws, invisible authors and technical actors that blend into a video game like aesthetic. The distorted, high contrast representations of the world function as daily instruments of navigation and shift the relation to urban environments through a frozen image sphere. The central position creating these new types of map abstractions is erased within the cartography.

Performing for the Screenshot

Molly Soda

I click, drag, dump, screenshot, move, delete, organize, and forget about the items on my desktop. It is a space of constant upheaval and an intimate look into what I may or may not be thinking about during a given moment in time. I feel a tiny little rush when I glance at someone’s desktop, over their shoulder at a coffee shop or on the projector before a presentation. The desktop is the computer’s bedroom.

The bedroom, once a private space that only those close to us had access to, has been thrust into the public sphere via the internet over the past 20 years. In 2003, I started uploading photos of myself in my teenage bedroom onto blogging websites, posing in front of my bright yellow walls plastered with show flyers and ripped out magazine pages. My bedroom has been highly documented since the age of 14—I’m now 33. It has served as a backdrop for webcam videos, selfies and as a studio. There is a record of every place I’ve lived. I’ve noticed how, not just my bedroom, but all of our bedrooms, have evolved over time with frequent exposure to the internet and the imagined others who would be interacting with them from their own bedrooms. The bedroom, once a reflection of our unkempt, messy interior worlds, has become a highly curated and manicured backdrop.

Online, the bedroom becomes a set, a place where we perform. I see this most acutely on platforms such as YouTube or Twitch, where intimacy is performed for a living. Objects in the background of these videos are perfectly placed—a plant, a candle, a little sign—frame the performer, while staying slightly out of focus. If you flip through enough of these videos, you start to notice the same objects, the same signifiers across channels. Everyone’s bedroom starts to look the same. Most of these videos are not even filmed in bedrooms but in offices, extra rooms and corners of living rooms that are made to look like a bedroom.



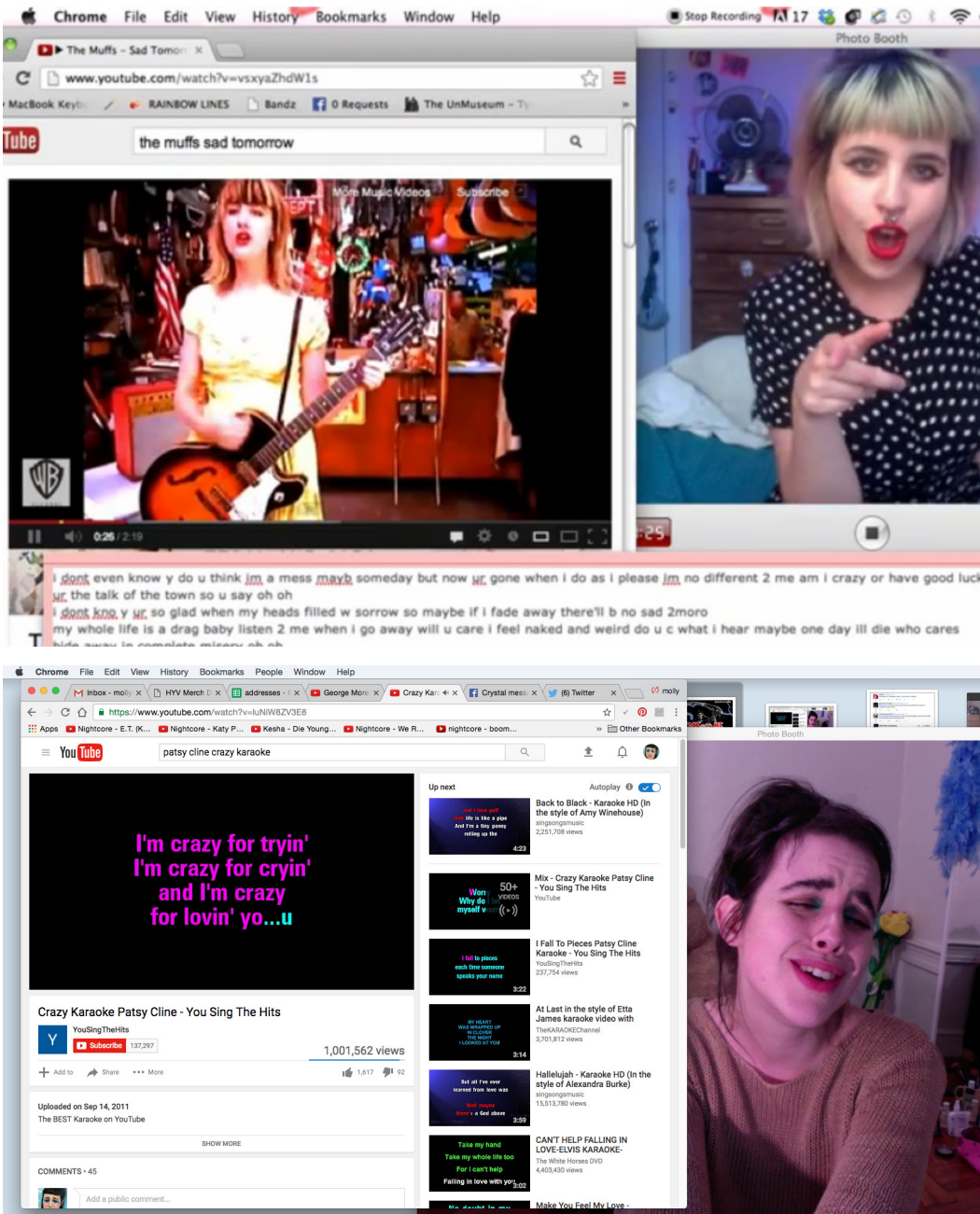
NEW COLOURPOP WILD NOTHING COLLECTION..... good or boring?! By Kathleenlights, Screenshot taken 8/5/2020

Unlike the bedroom, the desktop feels like the last unmaintained private space that we have. There are no design or organizational trends to follow and no fear of judgment for having a cluttered space. The desktop and the bedroom are linked to me—while one has evolved along with the way we have come to share online, the other remains somewhat untouched because it is rarely made public. I’m interested in the ways in which the desktop can also become a site for performance and mediation.

For years I’ve been filming myself on my computer’s webcam, alone in my room, singing karaoke. There is a long history of people singing alone in their rooms online, from lo-res YouTube videos of ukulele covers to teenagers lip syncing on TikTok. I’m not sure why this impulse to share ourselves singing exists, it’s something very vulnerable that opens us up to criticism, but it also opens the door to connecting with others over the shared love of a particular song and allows us to convey a particular mood or taste without having to articulate it. Gone

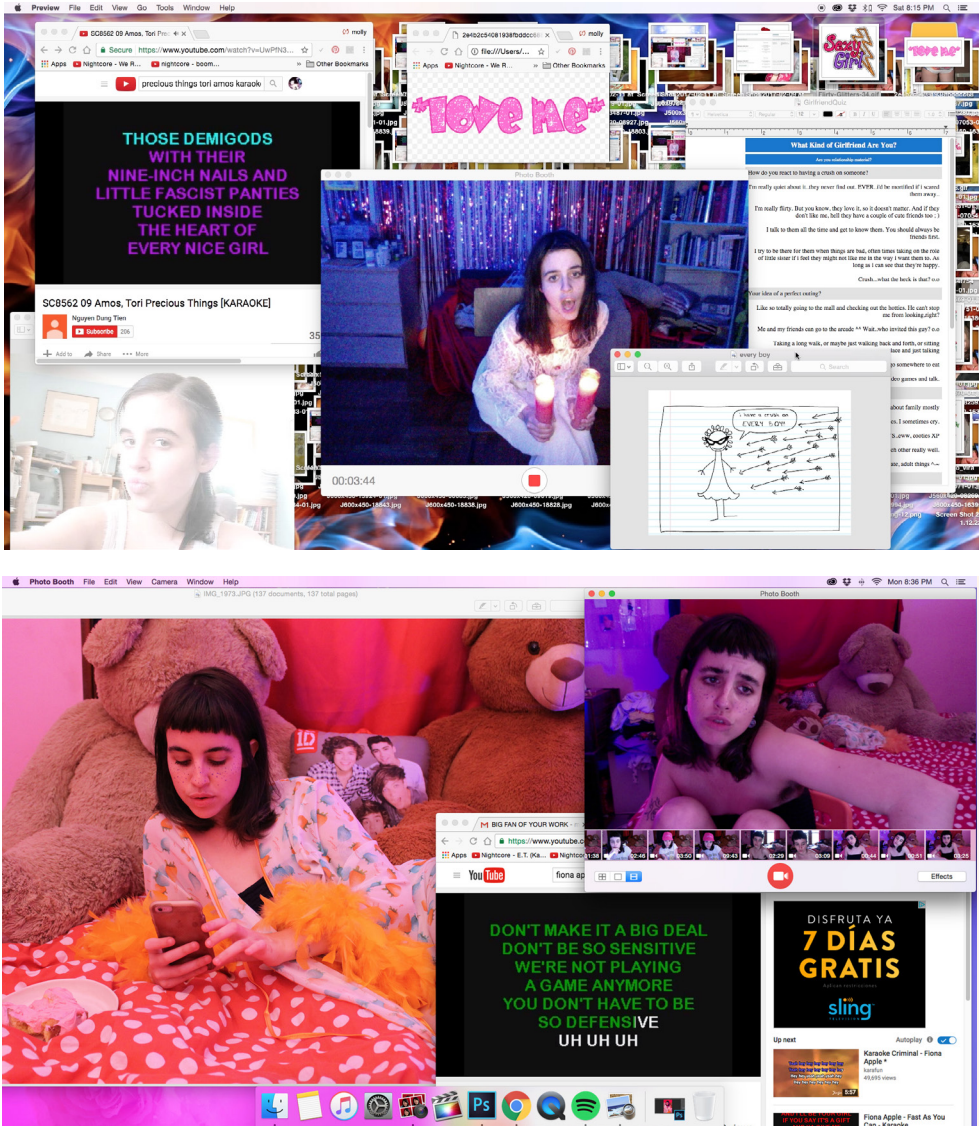
are the days of posting a song lyric as an away message, but the impulse remains, be it in a different form. Singing, unlike a vlog or a casual talking video, is an obvious performance. It lays no claim to being authentic or relatable—things that are seen as highly profitable both socially and financially in our modern online world. I’ve been particularly interested in karaoke because it allows anyone to become a performer regardless of talent or musical skill, and while it is probably considered ‘cringe’ to post videos of yourself doing karaoke, the desire is there.

Sometimes my karaoke videos get uploaded to YouTube, often they won’t. While recording these webcam performances there is a second performance happening on the desktop. I arrange and resize windows—fitting my Photo Booth application next to a window that has a YouTube karaoke video with lyrics. I began to screenshot these performances, as they were happening, hitting Shift, Command, 3 as I would sing. Sometimes I would capture a single moment in a song, a lyric that felt fitting to my mood, or a pose that looked flattering. Other times I would screenshot the performance repeatedly, only to go back later and pick out the best one.



Above Sad Tomorrow, 2013, below Crazy, Screenshot taken 12/2/2016

My screenshots folder is filled with this type of documentation. But these screenshots aren't just pure documentation of what was occurring on the screen at that moment, they are carefully crafted compositions. The size of the windows, the background image, and even how many icons clutter the desktop were all considered in the making of these images. Even the computer's default screenshot functions inform the performance. For example, on a Mac computer, where all of these performances happen—I've never once thought to do these screenshot performances on my Windows PC because aesthetically, it doesn't feel right—a screenshot will automatically save to the desktop once it is taken. The screenshots themselves will often start to populate the screen, joining the performance themselves. Sometimes, I will pause to quickly move the screenshot off of the desktop before continuing.

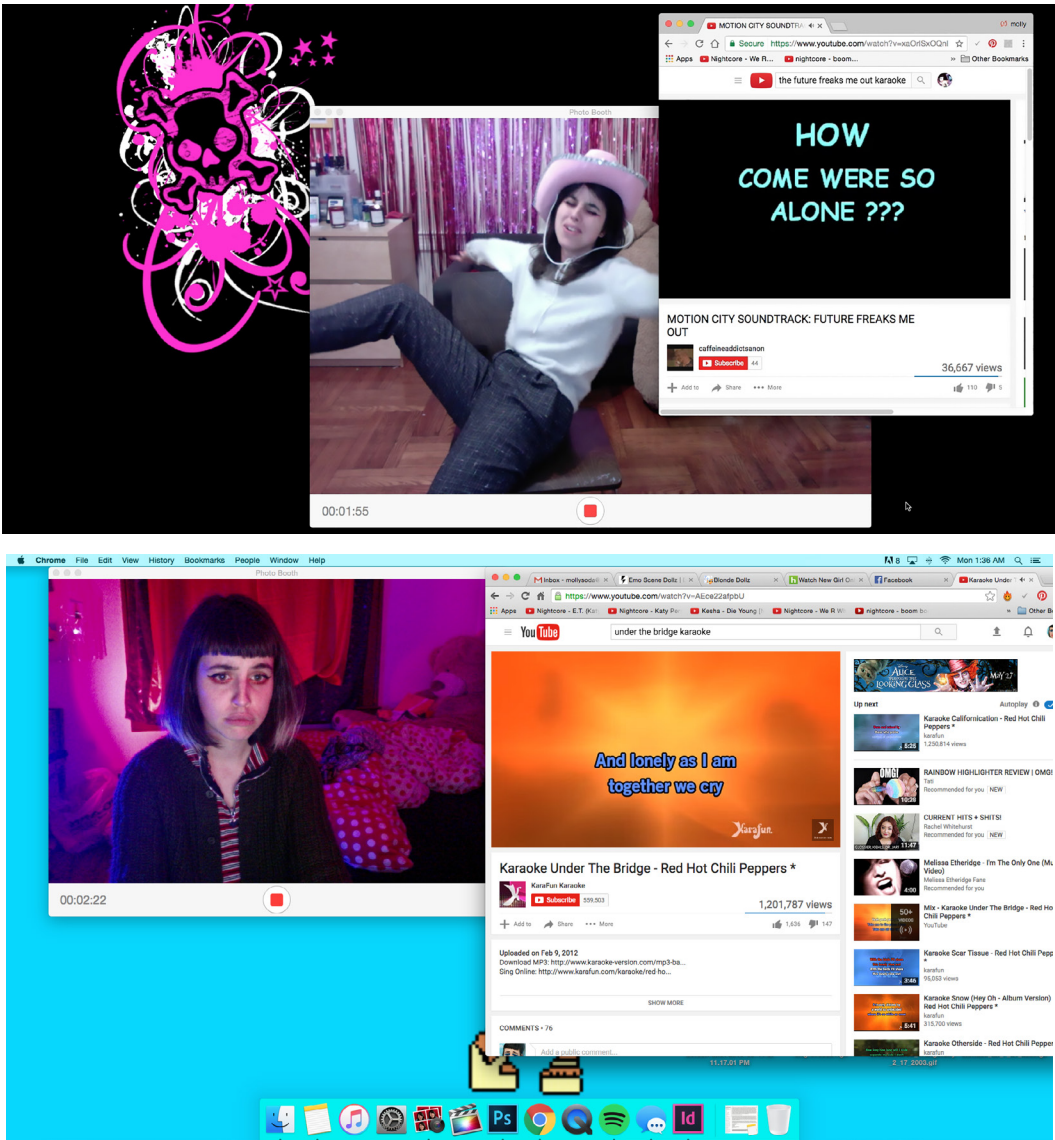


Above *Precious Things*, Screenshot taken 2/11/2017, below *Don't Be So Sensitive*, 2016

How can screenshots function as a site for performance when they flatten an interactive moment? The final output of these performances is almost never the video itself. Often, I wouldn't even hit record on my computer's Photo Booth, leaving no record of the actual video itself. All that remains are the screenshots. Occasionally, screen recordings will happen, but that leaves too much pressure to do everything 'correctly' in the allotted amount of time, the screenshot distills the moment succinctly.

Looking through the archive, I notice trends in the screenshots I've created. Many of the

moments in the songs that I decide to capture land on the words 'alone' or evoke loneliness. I often discard the shots where I am mid-singing, favoring those where there is a pause and I am able to pose. I am highly aware that I *might* share the screenshot, but looking back on the collection of them, I often haven't.

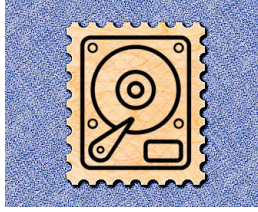


Above: *The Future Freaks Me Out*, 2017 Below: *Under The Bridge*, Screenshot taken 5/16/2016

Screenshots are often thought of to be proof, an unmediated document that shows the screen as it was in that exact moment. Unlike photography, they are less often presumed to be doctored. They feel neutral, they build a case. Playing with this framework, using a medium and space that are often deemed 'authentic', I push against this concept of presumed intimacy and authenticity. Is the impulse to curate always present once we decide to make something public? The screenshot exists as both an archive and a carefully crafted image.

The bedroom, due to its consistent exposure and presence as the backdrop of our online lives, has gone from a private space to a highly maintained film set. The desktop, our computer's bedroom, hasn't received this treatment to the fullest extent, but has the potential to through the act of screenshotting. Here, the screenshot replaces the selfie, livestream and self-recorded video as a potential site for performance and mediation.

desктоPostcards: An Interview with @lbert figurt



1) How did desктоPostcards come to be?

In its original formulation - circa 2019 - the 'desktopia lab' was a series of theatrical workshops and performative lectures centered around the very idea of haphazardly sharing the participants' laptop screens (or mine) in order to inspect/dig /revalue/spread their content in real time (via collective improvisation & dowsing strategies). Then the project became somehow more articulated and theoretical, but the fascination for random screenshots as *the-ultimate-digital-crime-scene* remained pretty strong—just to be tragically reinforced by the arrival of the pandemic, pushing users to both reconsider desktop computing over smartphones evanescence and literally carry out some constant *spring cleaning* in a growing mass/mess of unexpected surrogating services & misleading daily updates. That's why in April 2021, after a year of disorienting up-and-[lock]downs, I decided to launch a call for some (presumably) rather insightful, sedentary-yet-eventful 'desктоPostcards'.

2) Would you say a desктоP(ostcard) is more of a landscape or a portrait?

I think it depends on a *triadic balance* between the selected background image/color, the number and arrangement of files/folders/apps and the personality of the user. According to the history of painting (and later photography), the rectangular frame—emphasizing horizontality—is more suited for panoramas or wide views, but you can always opt for an abstract piece or a disorienting macro. On top of that, the sight could be just obstructed or obscured by clusters of stray icons and similar overlapping elements. At the same time, it's not always clear if screens are really shot on the fly or slightly *staged/tidied up*, so the question about authenticity and self-representation remains fruitfully open. Ultimately, we're usually confronted with a '*quiet*' desktop, (meaning no windows/programs/surfing is actually represented and captured), so—considering how much online activity in particular accounts for our [social-]mediated profile [or profiling] nowadays—an accurate portraiture is probably almost unattainable, like fantasizing about someone's bedroom while waiting in his/her/their foyer.

3) How does one situate oneself within/against a desktop? What role does the screenshot have in that process?

By the time the average screenshooter accepts to leave a [side]note to his/her/their desktop, things can suddenly change in a variety of polysemous ways. Since a very familiar—and private!—framework is extracted from the *boredom continuum* to be shared—discussed/criticized?—with others, the user can indeed choose to play along the lines of relaxed understatement, disclose funny anecdotes, problematize previous [virtual] interior design choices, rely on cryptic or concise sentences, totally detach from the given snapshot or even from the overarching OS or GUI, etc. One way or another, due to the *rejuvenated glance* over some *semi-invisible routinary set[-up]*, minor epiphanies are surely expected to pop up from such an *e-stranging ambience-selfie*, and to possibly radiate healthy astonishment and reflexive energies in a computational gallery-of-mirror where user-friendliness usually rhymes with obtundation and customization with mindless agency.

4) Instead of final thoughts, could we have a screenshot?

Of course, here you go:



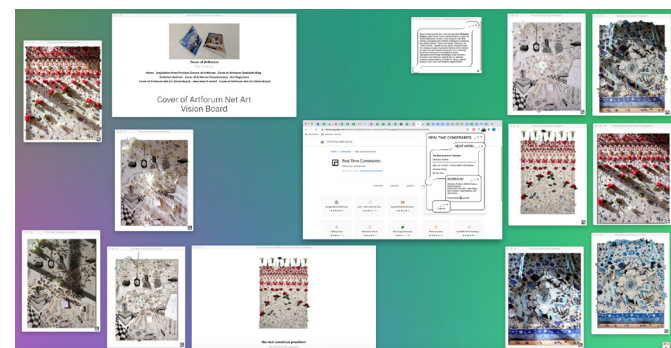
Screengrabbing as Documentation: The Role of the Screenshot in Archiving Net Art

Rebecca Edwards

It is difficult to future-proof, properly record, and accurately document a web-based project. The benefits of other forms of documentation (traditional photography, camera recordings, text-based archiving) over screengrabs, gifs, or pngs, often include metadata that is stored to place context around the image, or video. Screengrabbing was used as a method of documentation in two recent online exhibitions curated by arebyte Gallery: *Real-Time Constraints* in late 2020 and arebyte's *Plug-In for The Wrong* in late 2021/22. As the curator/facilitator of both of these, I would like to reflect on the role of the screenshot when archiving net art.

Real-Time Constraints

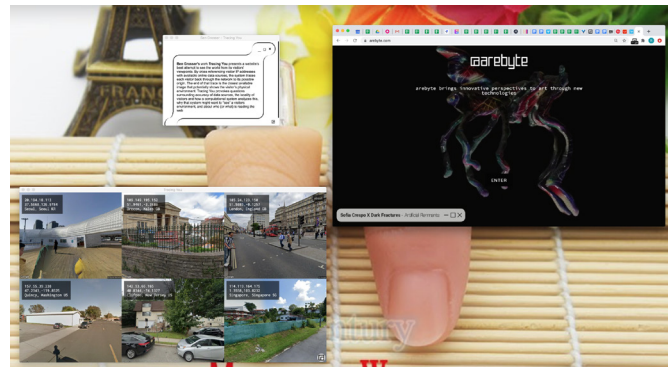
Real-Time Constraints was a group exhibition featuring works by artists working within the realms of artificial intelligence, algorithms, machine learning, big data, and interventions in web-based platforms. The exhibition brought forward the complexities of the present tense, in light of the emergence of such technologies, through works that were generated using real-time information pulled from the internet, or other sources, including news items, message exchanges, memes and image banks. The works looked critically at the current state of automated and autonomic computing to provide alternative narratives to data-driven and algorithmic approaches, referencing fake news, gender bias and surveillance.



Real-Time Constraints installation image on PC,

featuring *The Next American President* by Gretchen Andrew. arebyte Gallery, 2020.

Taking the form of a browser plug-in, the exhibition revealed itself as a series of pop-ups, where the works were disseminated over the duration of a typical working day, interrupting the screen to provide a 'stopping cue' from relentless scrolling, email notifications and other computer-centered, interface-driven work. *Real-Time Constraints* presented itself as a benevolent invasion - the size, quantity, content and sound of the pop-ups had been decided upon by each artist to feed into the networked performance. The exhibition was experienced through a synchronized global approach where viewers encounter the same pop-ups at the same time, no matter where they were, amplifying the exhibition's disturbance of mundanity across every time zone.



Real-Time Constraints installation image on PC, featuring *Tracing You* by Ben Grosser. arebyte Gallery, 2020.

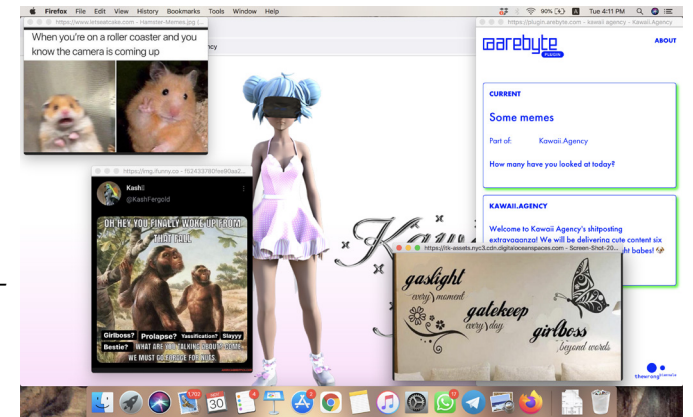
Real-Time Constraints made its primary argument through a reconfiguration of the usually annoying and uninvited browser pop-up, turning what is typically a tool of the system (and its owners) into a user-centric *stopping cue*. Stopping cues were most prevalent in the 20th century as a way to signal the end of something, the space in between one activity and the next. Stopping cues imposed a choice for the viewer: do you want to continue watching/reading/listening, or do you want to do something else? They also made the mental space available one needs to digest what they'd

just experienced, enabling useful processing of information, and thus, satisfaction through action.

In the way we consume media today, there are no stopping cues. There is no design in place that allows us to question our behavior; social media applications, news sites, streaming services, email and messaging services are a bottomless source of mindless scrolling. *Real-Time Constraints* invited critical reflection on the systems and processes we are (still) embedded in all day long and allowed viewers to take a break from the animated bombardment of working online, albeit unannounced, to be a welcome distraction.

The Wrong

As an adaptation of the *Real-Time Constraints*, the *Plug-In for The Wrong* condensed the magnitude and unique breadth of exhibitions and works featured in the biennale to be presented as a more selected presentation. Originally positioned as a new way to experience, The Wrong projects were made iterative, pulled apart and pieced back together via programming a series of pop-up windows, their size, position on the screen, timing and information to be decided by each curator. The pop-ups could contain images, audio, auto-play video, iframed websites and 3D digital worlds which were streamed directly to the viewer's screen, relinquishing the need to click through to experience the works. Instead the projects unfolded slowly, or quickly, over the period of a week, allowing the fragments to be digested in a different way. It was important for the online projects, especially website-based exhibitions, to be fluid and to make sense to be seen away from the website it was initially intended to be experienced. The dual-sided nature of this meant curators could revisit and adapt their projects for a new way of viewing; for some curators this meant adding extra or exclusive content, for others it meant delivering something long form, like a film series, as an extended screening.



arebyte Plug-In for The Wrong installation image on PC, featuring *Kawaii Agency*. arebyte Gallery, 2021/22.

Screengrabbing as a net art practice

It is difficult to future-proof, properly record, and accurately document a web-based project. The benefits of other forms of documentation (traditional photography, camera recordings, text-based archiving) over screengrabs, gifs, or pngs, often include metadata that is stored to place context around the image, or video. Exchangeable Image File Format data can contain camera exposure, date and time the image was captured, GPS location, ISO and shutter speed, aperture, white balance, camera model and make. This data is useful when conducting search functions on large amounts of imagery, and provides important information for identification and copyright protection, as well as for other photographers who might need this information when trying to learn new techniques.

However, this type of data is perhaps only relevant for documentation of physical work. What are the perimeters when documenting a project that exists solely online?

This is something arebyte encountered when thinking about how to capture the essence of the plug-in tool for exhibition curating. Documentation of an online tool, custom webpage or project is especially difficult if the backend isn't pushed to github, isn't made

openly accessible and/or maintained by the artist, developer or gallery. Not to mention the fact that all of this relies on the larger currents of the tech economy and their interest in maintaining technologies and saving them from redundancy...

There are many examples of great work done in the field of archiving net art and web-based projects, Rhizome's *Artbase* and the *Digital Art Archive* to name a couple, but it's important to understand the breadth of the project to be documented and what might be useful to keep a record of. Art that is mediated through a screen requires a different methodology of documentation, a methodology that DAA describes as being 'an expanded concept of documentation', and one that needs careful consideration and forward planning.

Net art is inherently context-dependent through the nomadic sites of presentation it carries: sometimes a projection, sometimes a large tv, sometimes a laptop, sometimes a phone, sometimes a QR code, and-so-on. It is also usually a mix of many kinds of viewability: procedural, interactive, process-driven, multimedia, multiplayer, transient, performative, generative, automated, and often sometimes faulty. All of which adds to the complexity and specificity of experiencing it again in retrospect, or as documentation.

Unlike physical artwork that requires at least some form of IRL medium, art of a digital nature isn't necessarily situated within the material landscape—with the exception of the physical infrastructure of the internet, of course, and other more hybrid works—but is rather made up of web browsers, developer codes, scripts, search engines, and various other online tools, as well as zeroes and ones and bits and bytes, that coalesce together to form the work on the screen. This may pertain more to the conservation of such work but is important to note within the context of documentation as net-art challenges this binary. As an integral part of the work, if you aren't also archiving the code, the developer notes, the iterations, or the roots of the work, then do you have complete documentation of it? Discounting the

inevitable possibility that the software used to create the work might cease to exist in the near future (Javascript, for example) the question of how net-art should be documented properly has been mulled over since the early nineties by many notable figures in the scene. It is also inherently reliant upon the existence of software, browser engines, programming languages, server architecture, and everything in between, in such a way that it becomes contingent.

To return to arebyte's plug-in and the two projects it has shown, *Real-time Constraints* in 2019, and a curated selection of embassy's from *The Wrong* biennale in 2021/2022, understanding the best way of documenting has been and continues to be somewhat ambiguous. Understanding the span of a project—with all the nuance, interaction and reach, accounts of visitor experiences, and relevance—often comes with hindsight and so documentation of transient projects like the plug-in is often transient too. Screenshotting as a form of documentation is often the first port-of-call but should be one of many ways adopted to ensure a project receives the documentation it deserves.

Credits

Real-Time Constraints

Group exhibition presented in a browser extension plug-in. Exhibition ran 24 July - 30 September 2020.

Featuring works by Gretchen Andrew, Sofia Crespo X Dark. Fractures, DISNOVATION, Jake Elwes, Ben Grosser, Libby Heaney, and Joel Simon.

arebyte Plug-In x The Wrong 2021/22

Browser extension plug-in for The Wrong Biennale 2021/22. Exhibition ran 4 November 2021 - 5 March 2022.

Featuring projects curated by Goldsmiths Computational Arts, Bjørn Magnhildøen, Sizzle Lyk Dat.Studio, Kawaii Agency (Bart Seng Wen Long + Juliusz Grabianski), Enrique Salmoiraghi, Systaime, Ayshia Taskin, Lupus Siegert + Ross Alexander Payne, Jonathan Tuitou, Canek Zapata + Luis Mercado, Collagism (Holly-Anne Buck), Flounder Lee, and Rebecca Edwards.

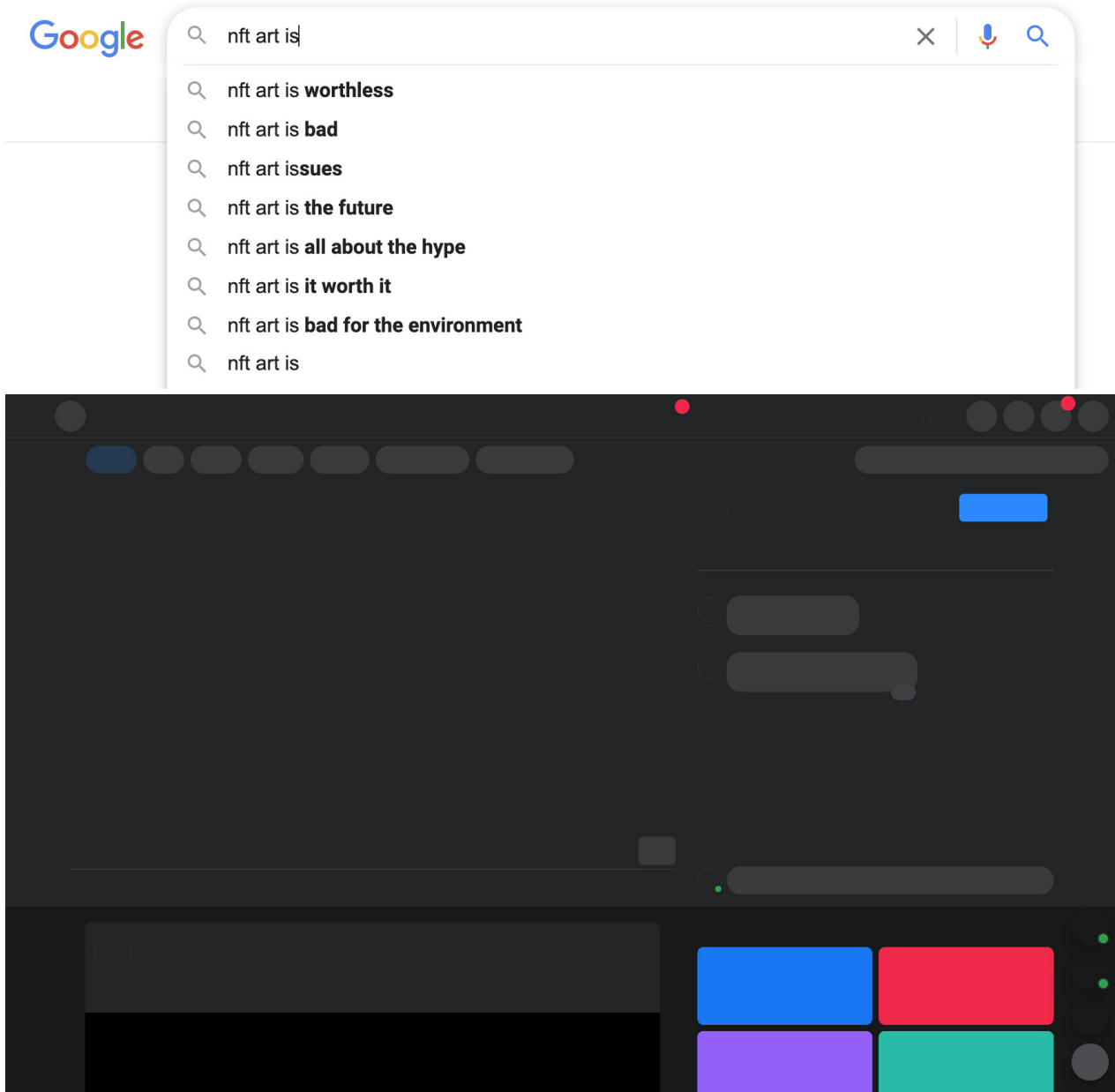
Credit for the Plug-In

Developed and powered by arebyte, 2021.

Design and Development - Rob Prouse & Tom Merrell.

All rights reserved - arebyte 2021.

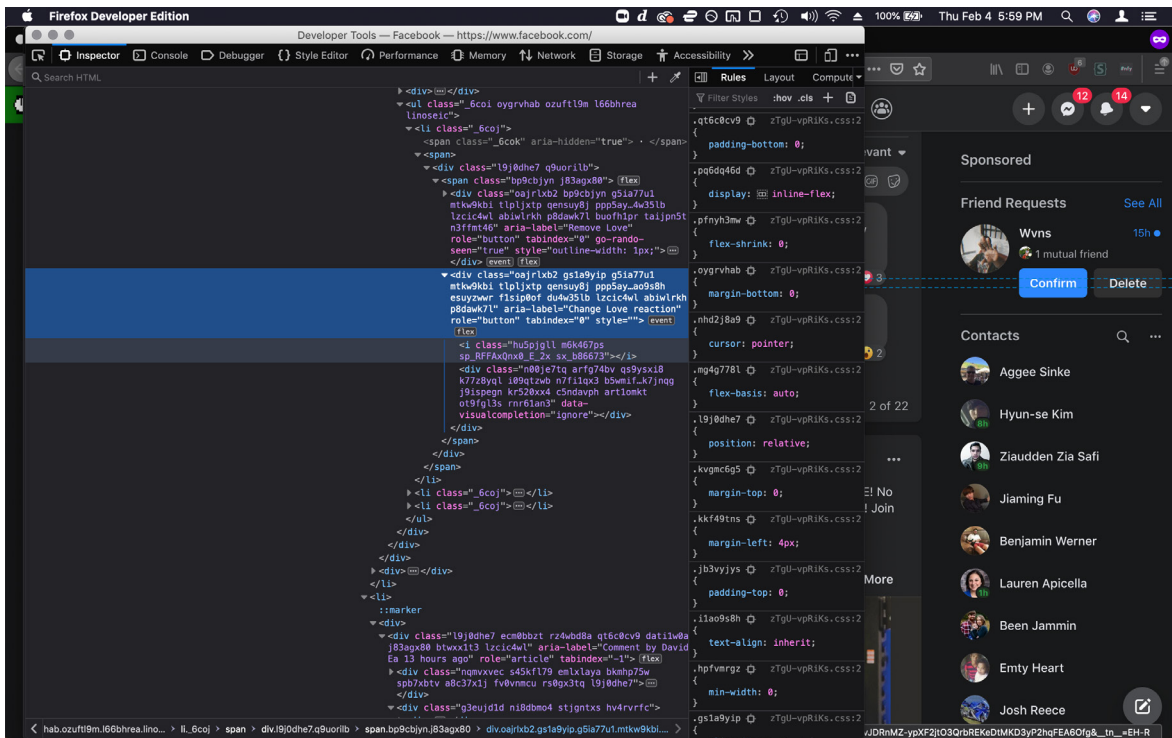
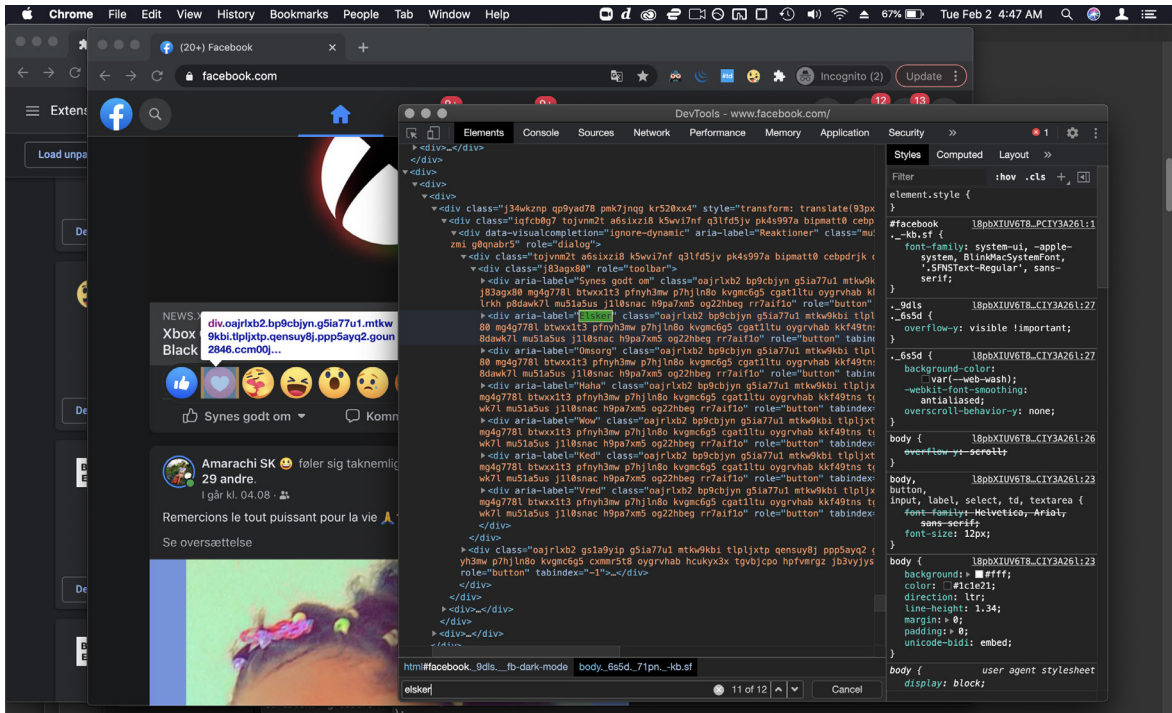
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let tmpInput = document.createElement('input');
tmpInput.style=
  "opacity:0;position:absolute;z-index:-1000;benwashere:yes";
e.parentElement.appendChild(tmpInput);
tmpInput.focus({preventScroll: true });
e.parentElement.removeChild(tmpInput);
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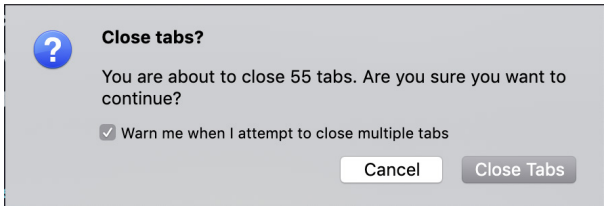
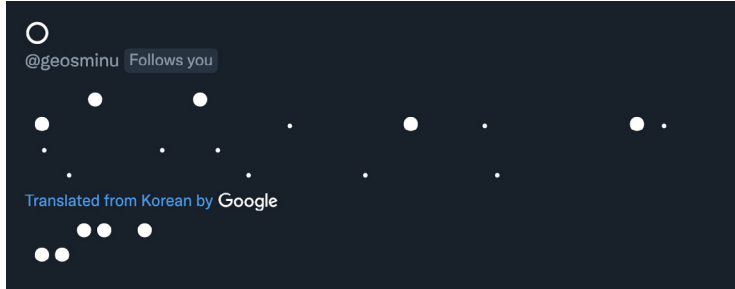
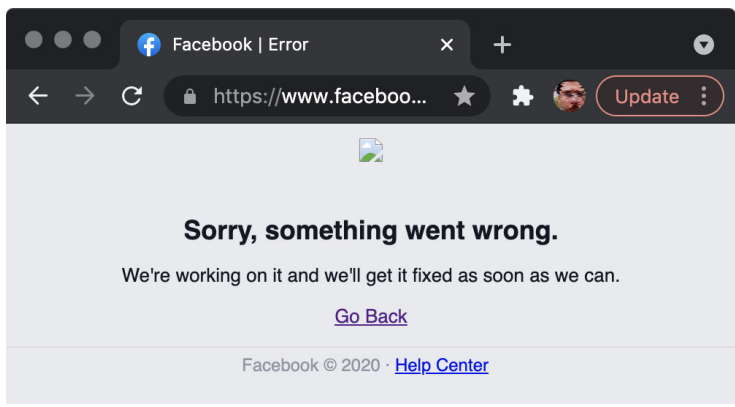
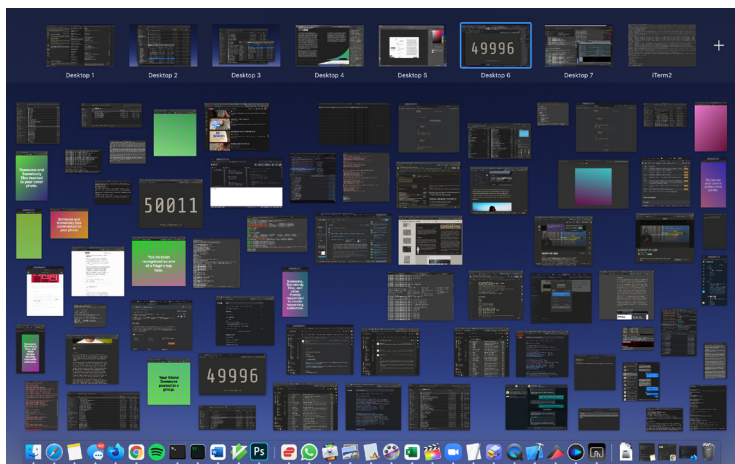
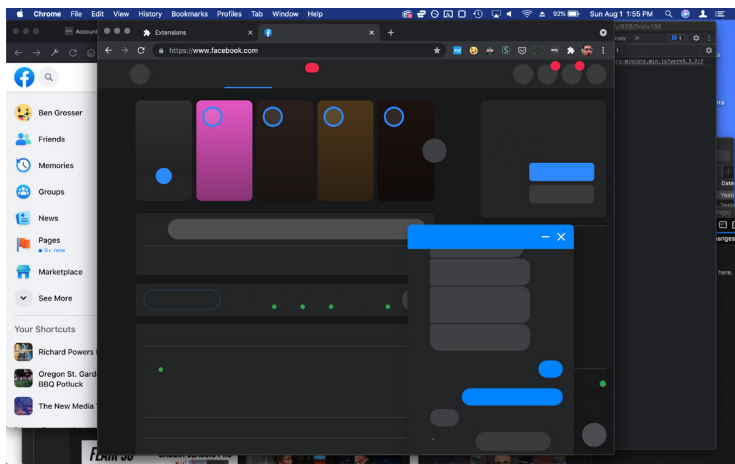
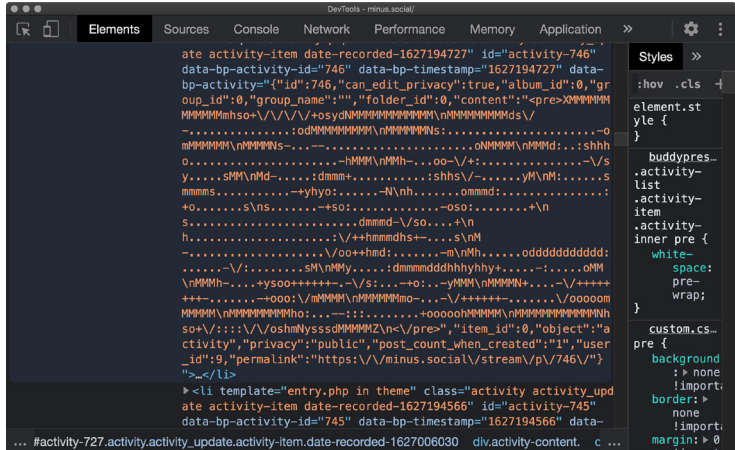
An Untitled Collection of Screenshots

Ben Grosser

This is a small selection of thousands of screenshots I took during the last 12 months as part of my normal course of navigating the internet. They cross a number of categories, from captures of social media interface bugs or quirks I noticed during my day (e.g., the moment Facebook went offline worldwide for 6 hours), times when tech platforms told me what I wanted was out of their preset bounds (e.g., when my status was too long or video too short), screenshots of my desktop and windows while developing work for an exhibition last fall at arebyte Gallery in London (e.g., desktop zoomout, Zuckerberg glitch, Facebook emptied of content via Safebook, examining Facebook code for Go Rando, etc.), and a tweet and Google search on the year's hot topic of NFTs.



The duration of the video you tried to upload is too short. The minimum length for a video is 1 second. Please upload a longer video.





Hacer Pantallazo: My Personal Diary Through Screenshots

Roc Herms

We say that photography has been digitised but we still take pictures of the same mountains. Today's cameras convert light into zeros and ones, sure, but what they capture still is physical. If what we photograph is still analog ¿Should we be talking about digital photography?

For 200,000 years Homo Sapiens have lived in natural environments. Their eyes were fed with reflected light from physical objects. Today we spend more than 7 hours a day in front of a computer, immersed in new electronic realities emitted by the small bulbs of the screen. We still have our ass stuck on a solid wooden chair, true, but we live much of our lives in a digitalised, pixelated landscape.

If we understand photography as the act of capturing visual information from our environment ¿what happens to photography when our lives are lived in front of a screen? Isn't it what we see relevant? If we can shortcut screen captures ¿shouldn't we be considering Screenshots as a new form of photography? The final step into photography's digitalisation, where the camera is digital as well as the subject in front of it.

Thanks to small little algorithms, "Hacer Pantallazo" (2014 – ongoing) automatically collects every screenshot I take on each of my screens. Notes, moments, curiosities, and experiences that seduce my gaze while living in front of keyboards. In "Hacer Pantallazo" I wish to document my life inside the screen.

Full project can be visited at <https://www.rocherms.com/projects/hacer-pantallazo/>.

68 Rivoli

Gabriel Menotti

The first time I ever lived alone and abroad, I made the mistake of getting a girlfriend as alone and abroad as me. We had come to Europe at almost the same time, but she arrived in the north of France and I in Southeast London. The academic year was about to start, and here was a pair of Brazilians on a ludicrous exodus. While Christ the Redeemer took off at that infamous *Economist* cover, we fought to find our footing in the old world, as it rocked against the shockwaves of the subprime crisis. Perhaps what brought us together across the channel and Schengen border was that sense of familiarity kinspeople share during a shipwreck. Online dating provided coherence to a foreign world that grew unstable by the hour.

As much as we tried to meet in person, class schedules were relentless and not even Megabus tickets felt cheap considering our student allowances. What's there more to do than to spend hours on MSN Messenger? We knew each other from the internet, after all, friends-of-friends on Orkut and other online forums, regulars of many of the same joke communities. In that sense, too, being geographically apart could have been a way to become closer to where we supposed our relationship should take place.

Ours were no modest calls, however. Cheap broadband seems to have solved, among other things, the decades-old dilemma of which lover should hang up first. With few online commitments to attend, we lived in a regime of languid connection completely different from the current allotment of days filled with Zoom meetings. The conversation could fade away, but our presences lingered, a living *clippy* on each other's desktop, keeping mutual company while we read in silence and answered emails, basking in the careless availability of the other person, ready for the inevitable moment when some funny link just *needed* to be shared—some comment on the current affairs just *had* to be made— and suddenly the commotion would be taking us over again.

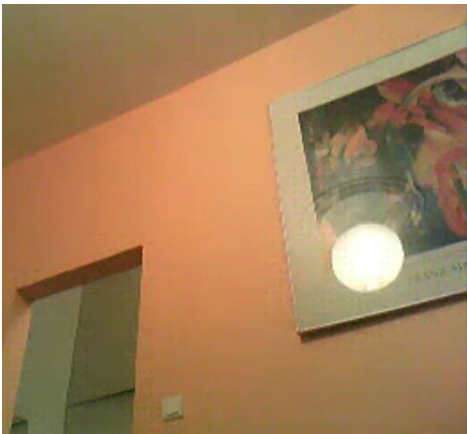
Soon it was pointless to log off, even if we had to get away from the keyboard. Webcams were switched on once we woke up and stayed

that way until bedtime. It was as if a portal had been opened between my cubicle and her house, number 68 in one of the many Rivoli streets across France. A tunnel I could cross without going through customs. Before long, in the empty frames revealed by each of her disappearances, I began to find myself at home. A place as frictionless as mundane.

I don't remember when I started collecting these images, but it rapidly turned into a regular practice. Every time I was alone during a call, I took a screenshot. It wasn't just a way to fill the void while waiting for her return. The views created by the computer, which was left on the corner of a bedside table or slumping over a pillow, fascinated me. These odd angles few people ever got to admire. I felt something akin to responsibility towards them. Was I attempting to accomplish through software and chance a total recognition of the place? Or to confront my own separation in order to prevent spatial collapse?

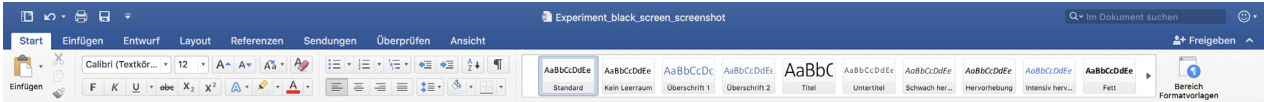
At the time, I construed the series as an exercise in *computational photography*. The term still hasn't been popularized to mean the incorporation of algorithmic processes into optical capture devices. For me, on the contrary, it seemed to evoke a complete redistribution of the camera across global computer networks. What had once been the short and linear focal length between the verge of a lens and the skin of a film now stretched afar, twisting and turning across the many kilometers of circuit connecting her webcam to my screen. The optical chamber, further spatialized.

Computational photography as a *thick* practice: a kind of gesture that, instead of the self-contained precision we came to expect from a smartphone, deals in environmental interference, graphic outpours, and informatic contingencies. With each screenshot, it might have seemed that I was plucking a delicate layer of pixels from my computer's GUI, whereas, in reality, I braved into a territory twofold foreign. I reached for the ghostly data within the wires, as it conveyed the most peculiar form of intimacy from the other side of the channel: pictures unearthed rather than made.



The Blind Viewer’s Seeing Screenshot

Ulrich Richtmeyer



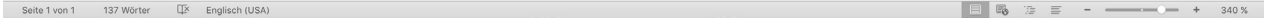
Experiment: black screen screenshot

I will write these sentences in Word, then make my screen maximally dark and immediately take a complete screenshot with the key combination. I will do it quickly because I want to capture the symbol for screen brightness, which fades relatively quickly.

If these sentences can be seen with normal brightness in the resulting screenshot, although the symbol for screen brightness photographed at the same time shows no light, this proves (insofar photography proves anything) that the screenshot could see in that moment what I could not see on the screen, since for me the screen is completely black shortly before, during and after the image capture. This screenshot shows something that I cannot see without it.



Summary: This picture shows the phenomenological difference between the entities involved.



I photographed a black screen and got a bright well-lit image showing that the screen was black during capture. (This image could be faked, but the description indicates how simple it would be to confirm the authenticity by repeating the experiment.) My screenshot apparatus did not see that I could see nothing, or that at that moment the screen was black. Its photographic object is a different one than mine and than that of the visible screen. For what the screenshot shows could not be seen on the screen!

But isn’t this a self-evident statement, which holds of every screenshot, and ultimately of photography as a whole? All photos show something different than what actually presents itself to the human visual capacity at the moment of capture. Walter Benjamin’s central concept of the *optical unconscious* describes this with a psychoanalytic metaphor. For him it was, above all, the spatial and temporal qualities, such as the close-up and slow-motion (as well as actually all types of movement photography), whereby the image shows what the person essentially sees but does not grasp (consciously) so acutely as the photographic or filmic apparatus.

However, the *optical unconscious* is not the same for the person and the apparatus, because it makes a difference whether we measure this against the human visual capacity, which stands metaphorically for consciousness, or against the technical conditions of the recording apparatus. This difference is also expressed by Paul Virilio when he wrote that ‘blindness is thus very much at the heart of the coming “vision machine”’, which he conceives as the ‘non-gaze’.¹ The screenshot apparatus can see where we are blind (the black screen) and is blind to something that we see (the dimmed screen). Thus the screenshot shows that ‘it is another

nature which speaks to the camera as compared to the eye’.² It is ‘another nature’ that speaks to the screenshot function of my computer than that which speaks to me or to non-human creatures or to other forms of photography. This other nature most likely speaks exclusively to the screenshot, being its own. It is not an optically generated image but rather a computed one. But computed on what basis? Certainly not on what is shown on the screen.

The photographic object of my screenshot is the encounter—which remains hidden to me visually—that takes place on the dark screen between the text document and the temporary brightness symbol of the screenshot. But the intention of my screenshot is not to generate a beautiful, unusual or sensational image of the encounter in the darkness, like a camera trap for wild animals, where I would also be unable to see what the apparatus sees. The intention is to capture, with this image of the encounter of the brightness symbol with the text document, the rules of perception of my screenshot.

Thus without meaning to, I have brushed up against the old photographic themes of witness and indexicality with this screenshot. All photographic images can be manipulated, and nonetheless we believe that what they document has occurred in reality. Roland Barthes, despite his better knowledge, gave this belief a final, or better a first, incontestable justification. Namely that despite all the dubitability of the photographic image, it is at least certain that an object emitting light must have existed in front of the objective, the traces of which were then recorded on the photo-sensitive layer. However Barthes’ assumption that ‘the thing of the past, by its immediate radiations (its luminances), has really touched the surface, which in its turn my gaze will touch’³ is a construction that strictly speaking no longer holds true even for analogue photography. For ‘the certainty that the photographed body touches me with its own rays’⁴ was already undermined with the intermittent negative. In the dark-room an electric light goes through the negative and leaves its traces on the paper print. And yet it was considered to hold of both analogue and digital photography that the ‘photographic referent’ is ‘not the *optionally* real thing to which an image or a sign refers but the *necessarily* real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph’.⁵

The argument can even be repeated for photography without any apparatus, e.g. photograms, which lack any objective. If we understand light to also include the frequencies of natural and artificial light that are invisible to the human eye, then this even holds of x-ray photography or the ultraviolet photography that Talbot had already reflected on. However even this last bastion of photographic indexicality is lacking in my experiment. Unlike all other types of photography, here, for the screenshot we do not need to assume any object emitting light.

The screenshot photo is a computed image that in contrast to the computed images of digital photography is no longer generated optically. It does not arise from any drawing with light, even if it is usually made visible with electric light, or more precisely digital light. So where is the photographic object of screenshot photography, if it is not found on the visible screen? Paul Frosh answered this question as follows:

From what does the screenshot grab? Here the comparison to photography becomes even more important. A chief characteristic of photographs is that they depict a prephotographic visual field (including when this field, a conjunction of objects in space and time, is arranged or “staged” especially in order to be photographed). In regular photography, whether analog or digital, the pre-photographic visual field is something other than the camera or photographic

1 Paul Virilio, *The Vision Machine*, trans. Julie Rose, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994, p. 73.

2 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, ed. Jennings, Doherty, and Levin, Cambridge MA and London: Bellknap Press, 2008, p. 37.
3 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida; Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard, NY: Hill and Wang, 1981, p. 81.
4 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 81.
5 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 76.

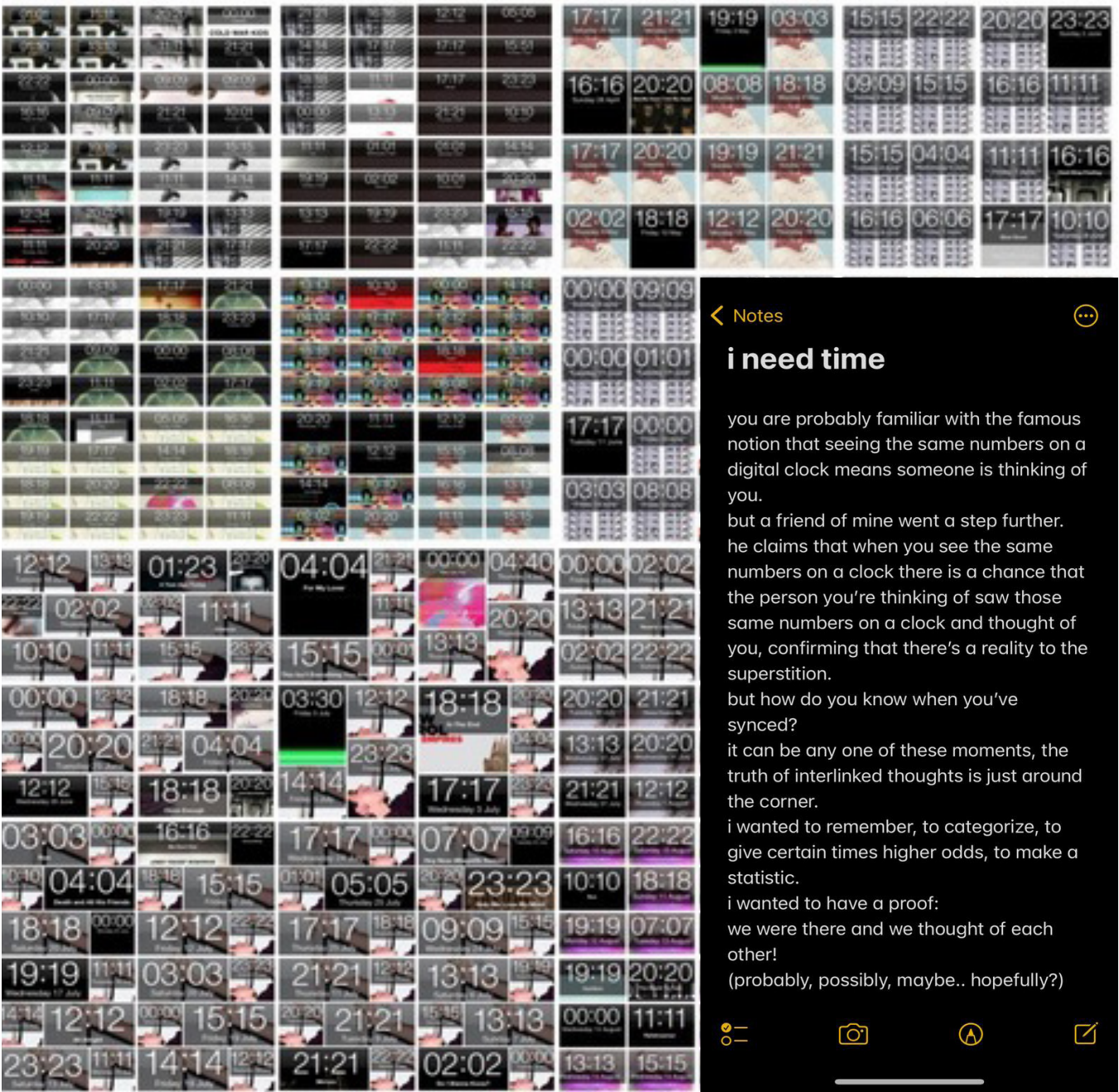
i need time

lu

device being used. In contrast, in the case of the screenshot, what is reproduced is the displayed content of the device itself. The photograph “captures” an image of the world; the screenshot “captures” an image of the device.⁶

The comparison with photography is understandable, but I find the conclusion unconvincing, since in my experiment, the pre-photographic visual field is not identical with the ‘displayed content of the device itself’. It might be helpful to say that the screenshot is actually a snapshot of an image that could have been displayed as a screen image at the moment of capture from the available data. But this is also untrue, since the displayed brightness of the screen would have to be a part of its image data—or at least could be. The screenshot could theoretically be a true screenshot, since all the appearances on the screen that it ignores could be integrated into its computation.

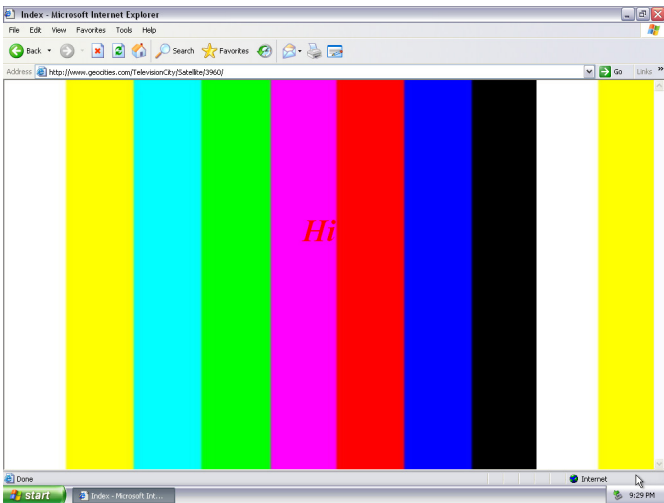
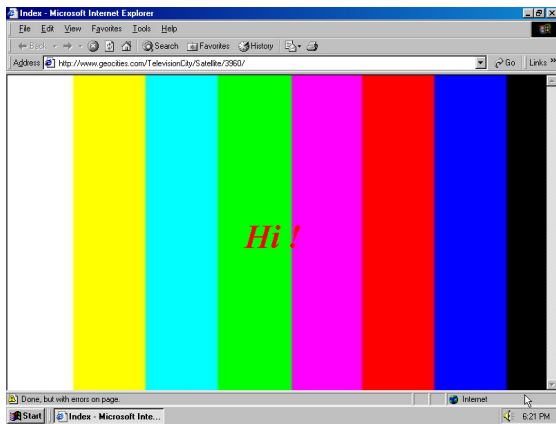
The visible screen is not the photographic object of screenshot photography, as I falsely assume when I’m taken in by the name. The screen for screenshot photography is like the viewfinder on analog cameras or the display on digital ones. I look with the aid of such images, like with my screen, onto a pre-photographic visual field in which I orient myself and from which I would like to generate image files, that when displayed later, will come as close as possible to what I saw in my ‘viewfinder’ image. In contrast to other photographic procedures, here I have only this ‘viewfinder’ image for visual orientation and cannot view the photographic object in any other way. I cannot view it with my own eyes independently of the apparatus or move around in this field with my body or with my apparatus in order to make photographic decisions. There is nothing more to be seen, for the fact that the pictorial appearance on my screen is based on computation, is irrelevant for the photographic operation of my screenshot apparatus, since I cannot make any decisions with that computation that would be determinative of the image. We are not generating a graphical file in an image processing program, but rather deciding on a screenshot on the basis of the ‘viewfinder’ image. But—and this is decisive—the screenshot is not a photo of my ‘viewfinder’ image, even if the two are almost indistinguishable, unlike in other photographic procedures. The screenshot seems to have the exact dimensions, iconography, color, resolution and brightness as the image on the screen, with which I see what I’m photographing. They do not correspond in light and darkness. ‘What you see is what you get’ has always been an unachievable ideal between screens and the image-generating technology, and is still the case when it comes to the screenshot.



6 Paul Frosh, ‘Screenshot, The “Photographic” Witnessing of Digital Worlds’, in Paul Frosh, *The Poetics of Digital Media*, Medford, MA: Polity, 2018, chapter 3, p. 18.

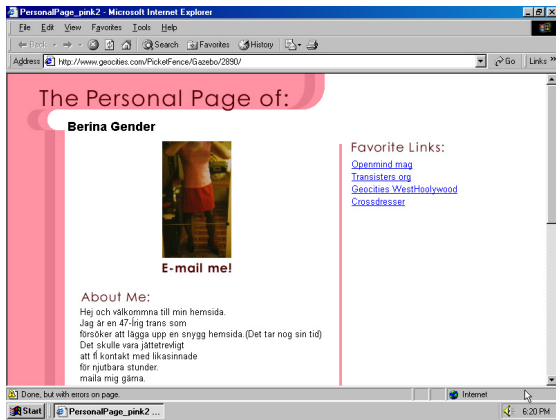
Is 1024×768 Showing More or Less Than 800×600?

Olia Lialina



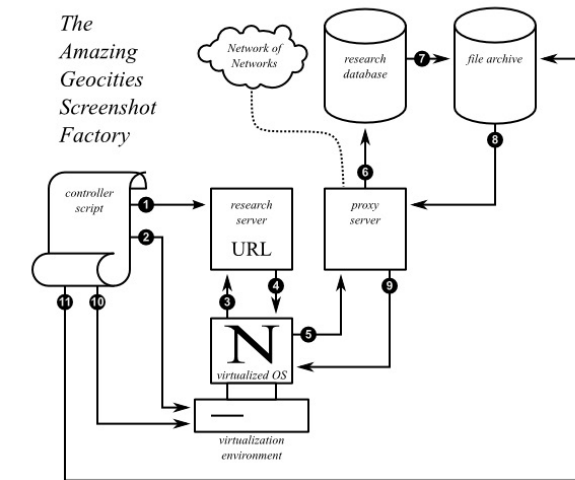
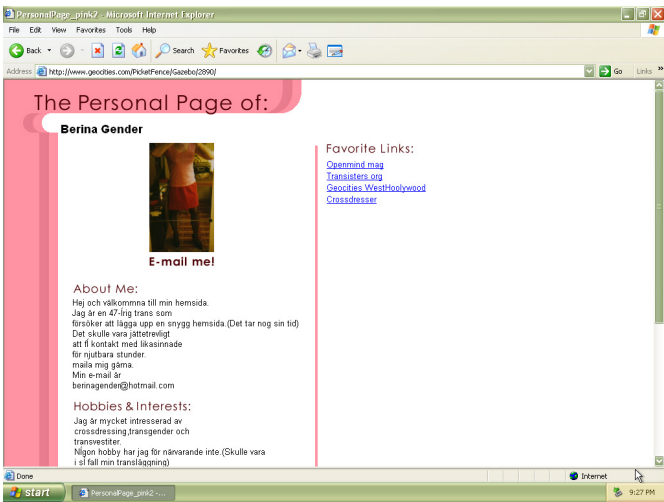
tl;dr: 1TB of KB Age switched to Internet Explorer 6 and Windows XP, but we don't go for 1024×768 ... yet.

Our Tumblr blog One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age Photo Op¹ started in February 2013. It became popular, people were exited about seeing a new snapshot of the past every 20 minutes. Web pages last updated before the advent of e-commerce and social networks, framed by the sweetest browsers with the cutest logos provoked nostalgia even among the followers who were born after these pages went live on the web.



Fifteen months later we made an unpopular but necessary change. Screenshots switched from being created with Netscape to Internet Explorer 5. To say the truth we were really postponing that decision as long as possible, but the 19 March 1999 release of IE5 was the border² after which we couldn't represent the web inside of a browser that no one used any more.

It is almost 2018, almost 5 years from the launch, and we are on the eve of the next big sad change. This time it is not connected to



- 1 Controller script pushes URL to be photographed to research server.
- 2 Controller script restores virtualized OS to a state where a browser is idle, then simulates key strokes calling a bookmark. A timeout starts.
- 3 The bookmark makes the browser go to the research server.
- 4 The research server redirects the browser to the desired URL.
- 5 The browser accesses the URL through an intelligent proxy server.
- 6 The proxy server asks the research database for files or redirects that match requests related to the original URL.
- 7 The research database picks the best fitting data from the archive. (If no match can be made, the request is passed through to the next proxy node or the Internet.)
- 8 Data from the archive gets sent back to the browser via the ...
- 9 ... proxy server.
- 10 The timeout has passed. The controller script instructs the virtualization environment to take a screenshot of the virtualized OS.
- 11 A new screenshot is saved in the file archive!

Dragan Espenschied, The Amazing Geocities Screenshot Factory

any particular moment in the history. It just happened that some weeks ago the repository of snapped sites got empty, and it was time to restart Dragan's screenshot factory and discuss the appearance of pages that were last updated in October 2001.

One thing was clear, time has come³ to change to Explorer 6 and stay with it till the last screenshot we have.

Another thing we seriously considered these last days was switching the

screenshots' resolution to 1024×768 (XGA). I wanted to use this break in the Tumblr blog's flow to address the issue, which was eating me from the inside for quite some time already: the eligibility of 800×600 (SVGA) to represent web pages of the 3rd Millennium.

There appeared more and more pages stating that they are best viewed in 1024×768; more and more often I stumble upon sites that are made for this resolution.

Add to it my personal memories about having 1024 monitor already in 1999. Plus the knowledge that Yahoo!'s Page Builder templates were designed for a 1024 pixels wide window, already 2 years prior to the time we are looking at now...

...and you know how I feel. Namely, I feel like I am a very mean researcher who makes old web pages look older than they are.

On the other hand, what I just described as "more and more" is only a perceived increase. Pages that are made for wider screens are still a minority among GeoCities pages last updated around the turn of the century: 3 of 100, as a quick test of 100 web pages last updated in July 2001 showed.

The vast majority still looks good or best with 800×600, and a lot are adjusted to look fine or ok even at 640×480. Either they were made for it, or their webmasters followed the rule that a web page should look proper first of all on the smallest of screens—an approach that we know today as "mobile first," but before mobile.

Also, if it looks bad on 800×600, there is no guarantee it will look perfect in 1024×768.

Also, I noticed that many pages announced to be designed for or look best with XGA did away with flexible layouts, a web design paradigm that came back a decade later under the name *Responsive Design*): content arranged into HTML tables with dimensions defined in percent values and therefore adapting to the available screen space gave way to exact size exact definitions in pixels, or exact pixel coordinates on the page. This stagnation in web design, caused by an increased availability of graphical WYSIWYG page editor software

1 One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age Photo Op, <http://oneterabyteofkilobyteage.tumblr.com/>.

2 Olia Lialina, 'Good bye, Netscape', One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age Photo Op, 14 June 2014, <https://blog.geocities.institute/archives/4996>.

3 Wikipedia contributors, 'Internet Explorer 6', 29 May 2005, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Explorer_6.

and professional graphic designers creating pages in Photoshop, started already in 1997; it was then deepened by the burst of the dot.com bubble in 2001, and with XGA resolution and Internet Explorer dominating users' desktops at least from 2004 through 2008, there was hardly a reason to keep web layouts adaptive. 800×600 screenshots demonstrate this inflexibility very well. It would be a pity not to see it.

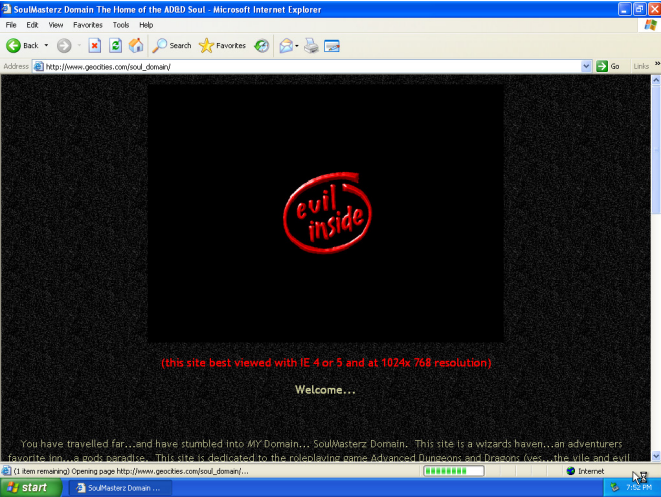
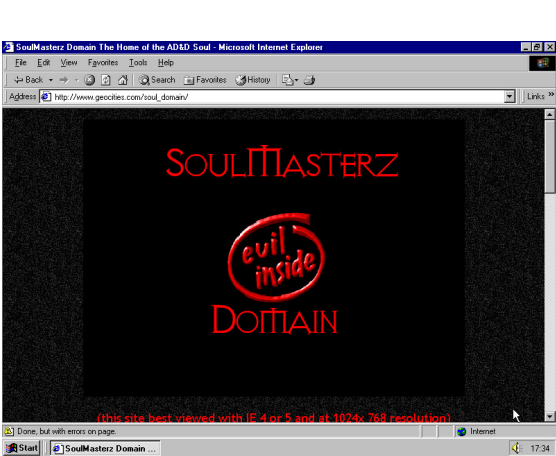
And finally, the claim that a page looks better in XGA doesn't mean it looks worse in SVGA.

Quite often i see the pages that seem “incomplete” because the bottom part is not visible in a lower resolution. But, on second thought, isn't it exactly the act, the necessity

GeoCities was seen (and ridiculed) by people in front of 1024×768 monitors since 1997. Shouldn't it be part of history? XGA was there when GeoCities was aging, and when it was killed. Actually (looking at statistic again) they both died the same year.

Our Tumblr blog's role is to feed the web with its past. It is tempting to conserve and show amateur web productions in smaller form, because it makes them look better, younger. 800×600 is like a beauty filter for web pages of all ages. Looking at the web through it you get sentimental.

If 800×600 is the web's ceremonial portrait, 1024×768 is it's hidden camera, it reveals what had to be hidden.



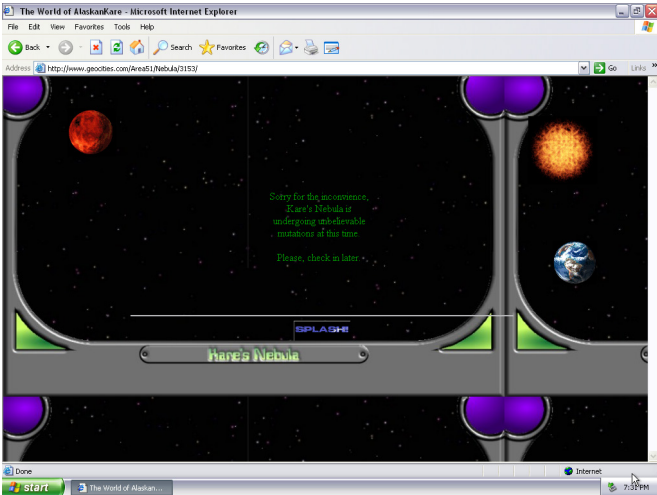
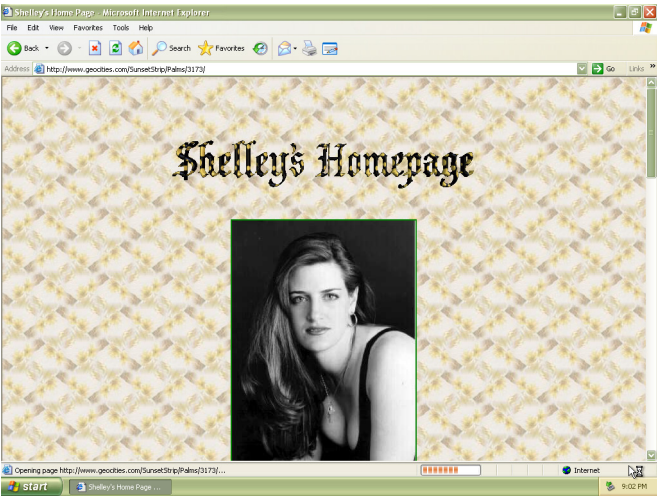
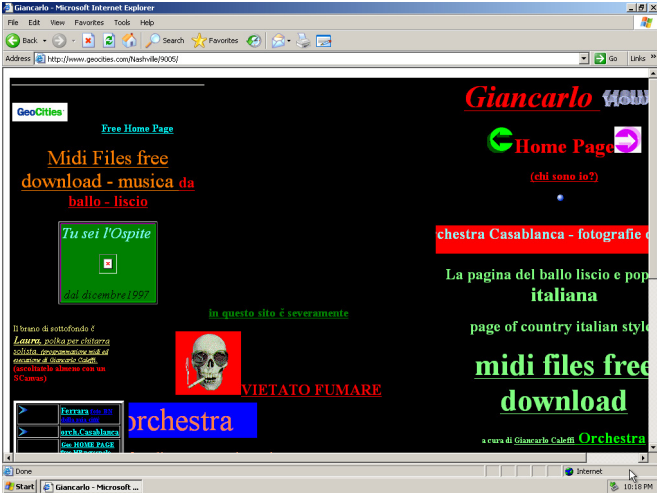
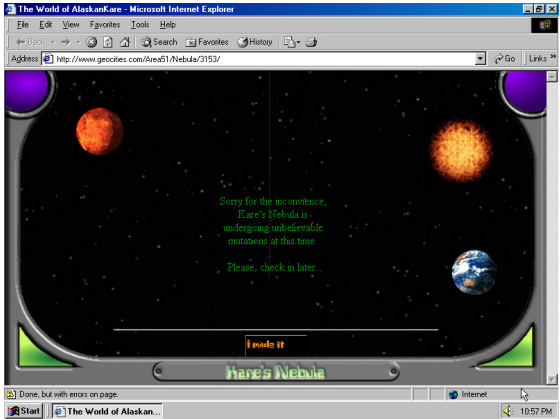
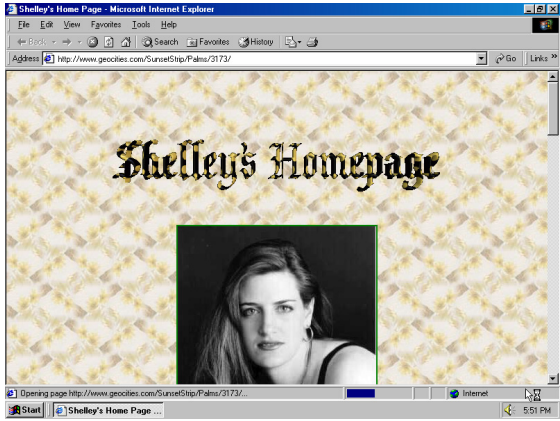
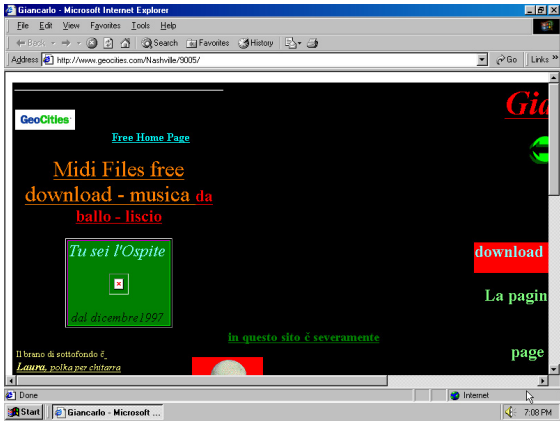
of scrolling, that provides a wow or comic effect?

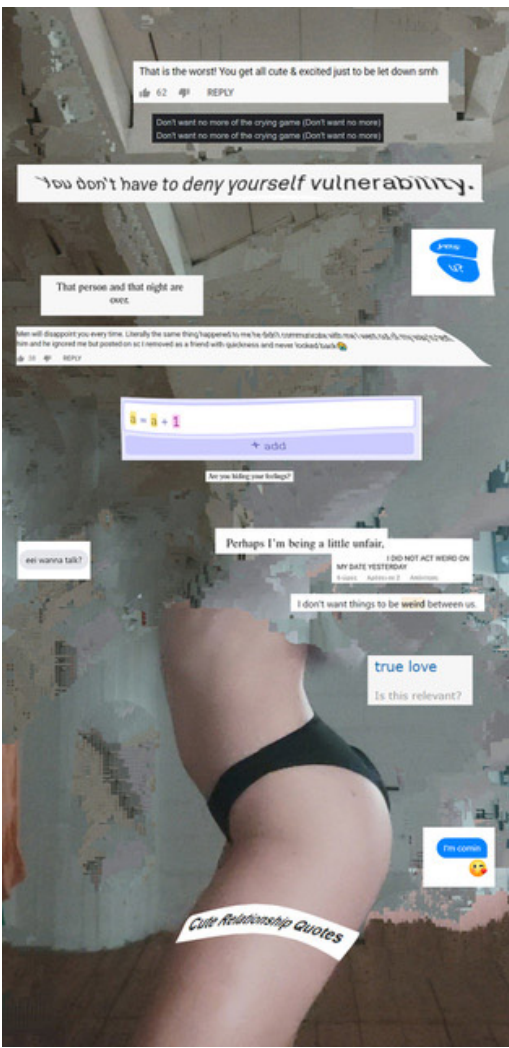
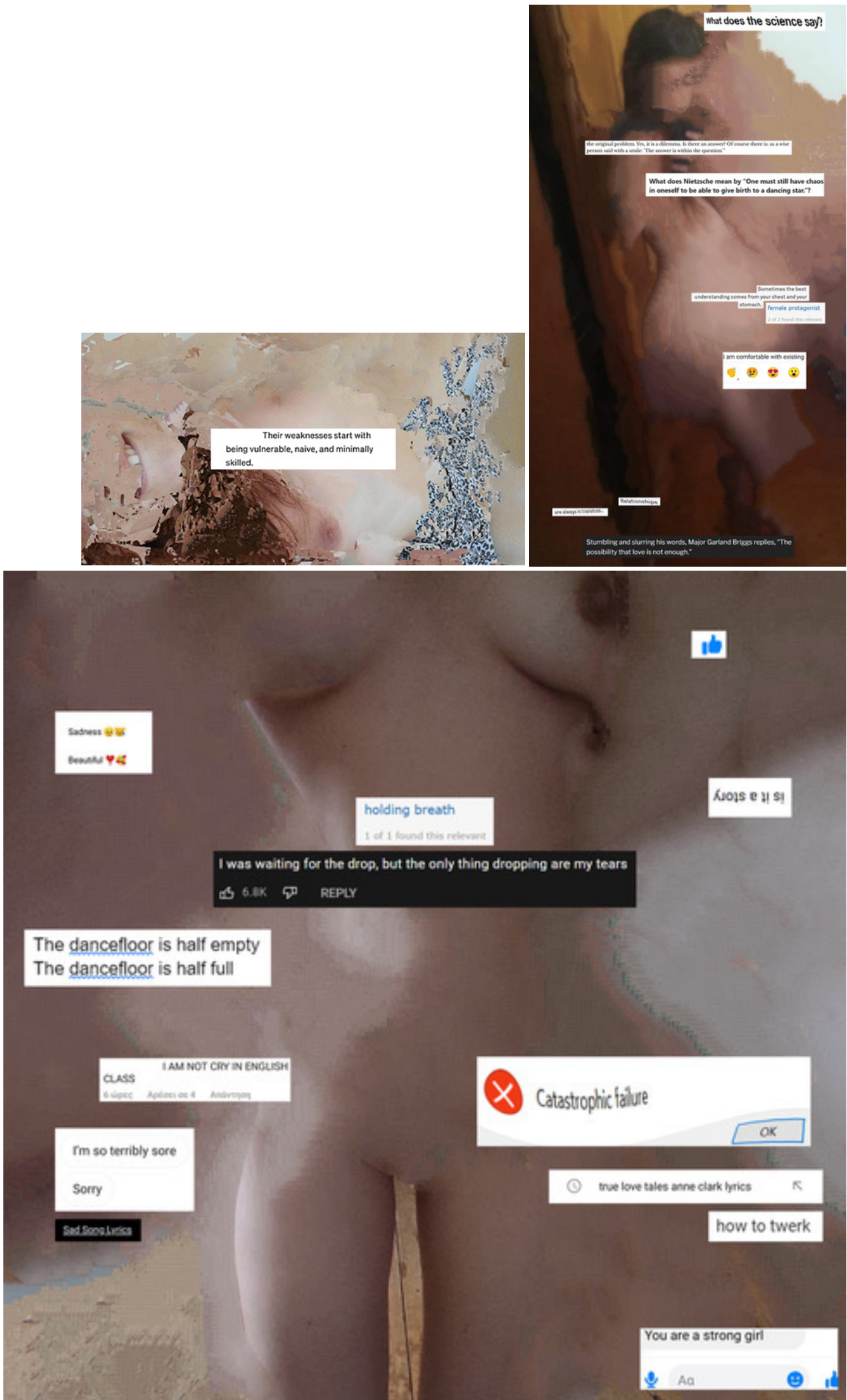
Furthermore, statistics show that 2002 started with 60% of users accessing the web with a lower resolution than XGA.

Based on these statistics and personal observations we can rightfully stay with SVGA up until 2004. And if we want we can find reasons to show GeoCities pages in this classic resolution, synonymous with the web's golden days, till the last screenshot.

On a bigger screenshot you see how the amateur web was shrinking and shriveling, you can get sense of how it was becoming small and unimportant. Not only when something is obviously wrong as above, but maybe even more in the case below: where everything is still alright, but you get the feeling of the web page aging, of belonging to another epoch.

This article has been taken over in its entirety, including a selection of images, from One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age Photo Op blog. It has been originally published on 21 December 2017. (URL: <https://blog.geocities.institute/archives/5917>)





One Day, all these cropped images will make sense

Ioanna Digenaki

One Day, all these cropped images will make sense is a project inspired by internet stories and online interactions. It's a diy exercise in fragmented storytelling, an attempt to make a narration out of screenshots. I try to connect the bits and pieces I collect, what is captured in my screen -seemingly in chaotic order-, hoping to understand more about me, my generation and the (online) human condition.

Each image is a nude edited in my smartphone, with text screenshots from the Internet; YouTube comments, messages, Co-star quotes, lyrics and whatever I once found worthy of screenshot.

WHAT (AND I CANNOT STRESS THIS ENOUGH) THE FUCK

Laurence Scherz

OKAY

that won't work
for the
key

Marcusstraat 52-54

Performing
Arts

Theatre?

The best part of humans is
they'll
lick each other's buttoholes
but

request a new fork when it falls on the
floor.

#eatclean

Vintage MANDOLINE open to offers

retro as fuck

Would be nice to talk about
tattoos
rituals

Eat slowly and
chew

your food.

Do you ever just wake up in the morning and be
like

no.

Buikslotermeerplein 259, 19:30

CHIA
SPICE
1,3% natural sugars

You have made yourself into a

portal

magic in blue
a different hue

Grandma: All people think about is sex these days

Grandma: [Picture of a couple with 14 kids leaning against the wall behind them, arranged
by height. A woman and a man sit on a chair on the bottom right, the woman is holding a
baby. Black and white.]

baffled British noises

FEESTFEESTFEEST

THEMA =
(childhood trauma)

Physics: exists

Cats:

Ah, there it is.

Adidas Performance
TECHFIT CROP – Top

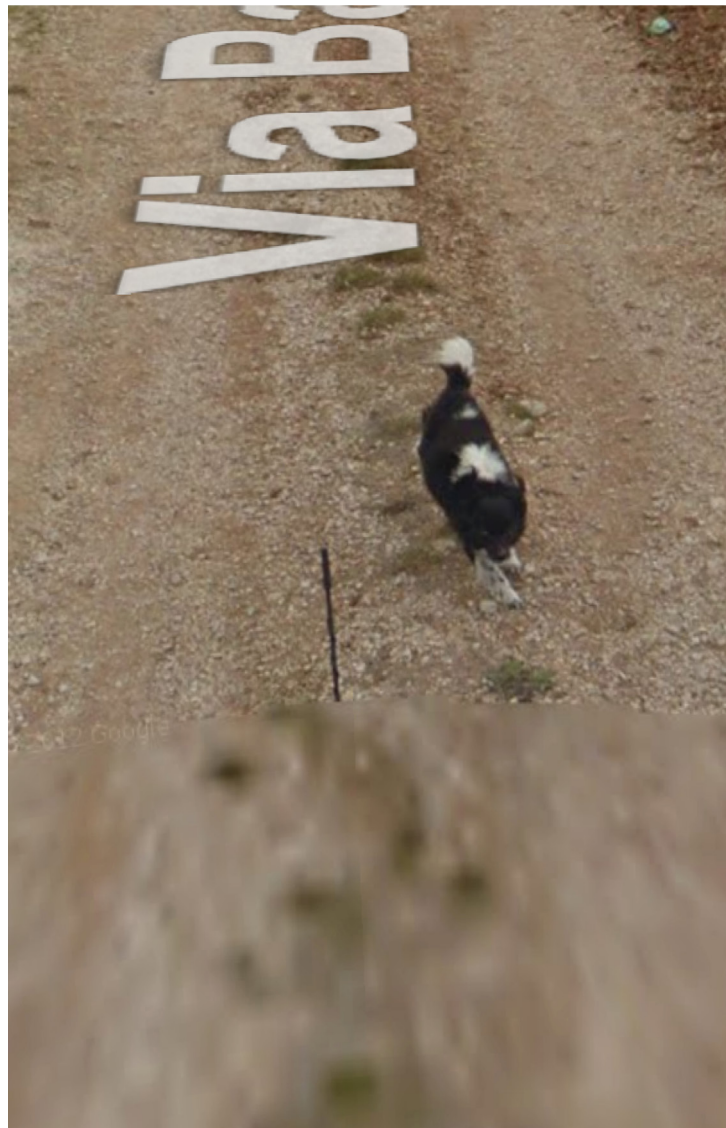
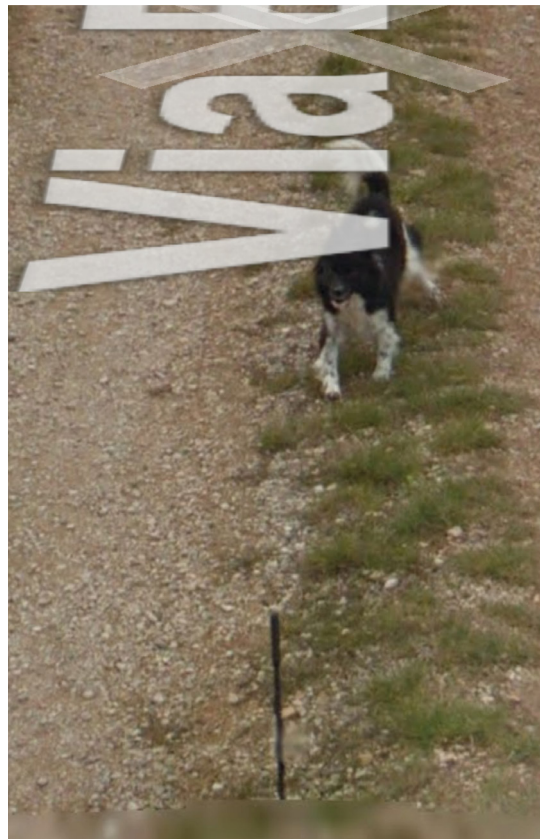
Sale ends in 5 - 4

The fuckening.

Can someone write an article on
millennials

killing the doorbell industry by texting

“here”?



Attenti al Cane: Twentysix Dogs Found on Street View, 2019

Lele Buonerba & Laurel Hauge

What does it mean to be in love with someone an ocean apart? How do you connect and create intimate space for yourselves when geography isn't on your side? In a moment where technology is more often denounced as a wedge driving us further from one another, it can also be a bridge between two worlds, a space where we can be closer to those who are far. The work contained within *Attenti al Cane* is about that act and gesture, more than it is about the end product of an image. *Attenti al Cane* is an outstretched digital hand across the expanse that separates Laurel Hauge and Lele Buonerba. Within each image and page are the decisions they made in conjunction, not isolation. In the curation of each screen-capture of the twenty-six dogs found in this book is the relationship of those two and how they see the world within the framework of their trans atlantic relationship. The dynamic, however, vastly differs from that of a penpal. *Attenti al Cane* is two lovers holding hands on an evening stroll, with the aid of Google, across the globe and through their longing to be side by side. (Text by Dominic Leon)

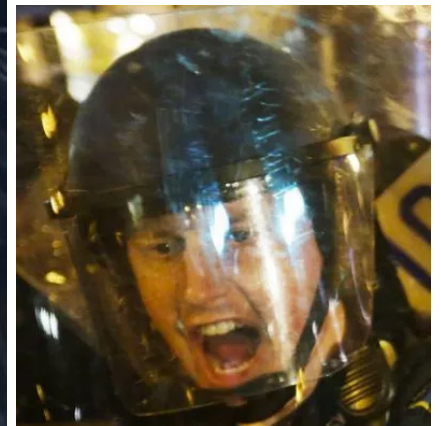
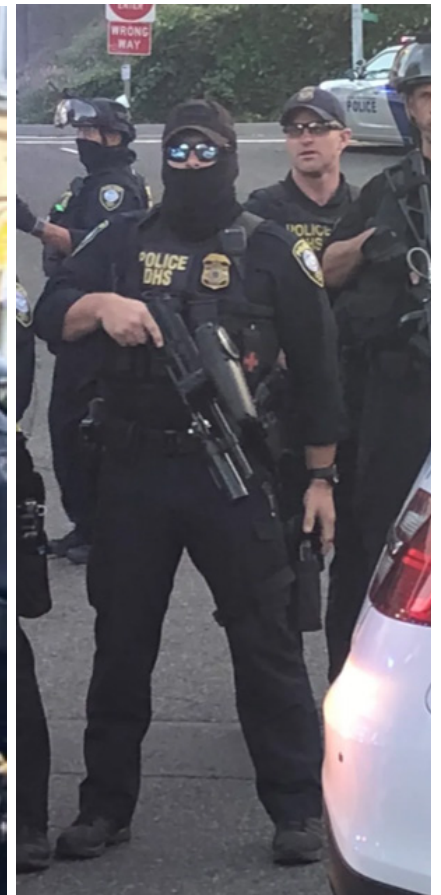
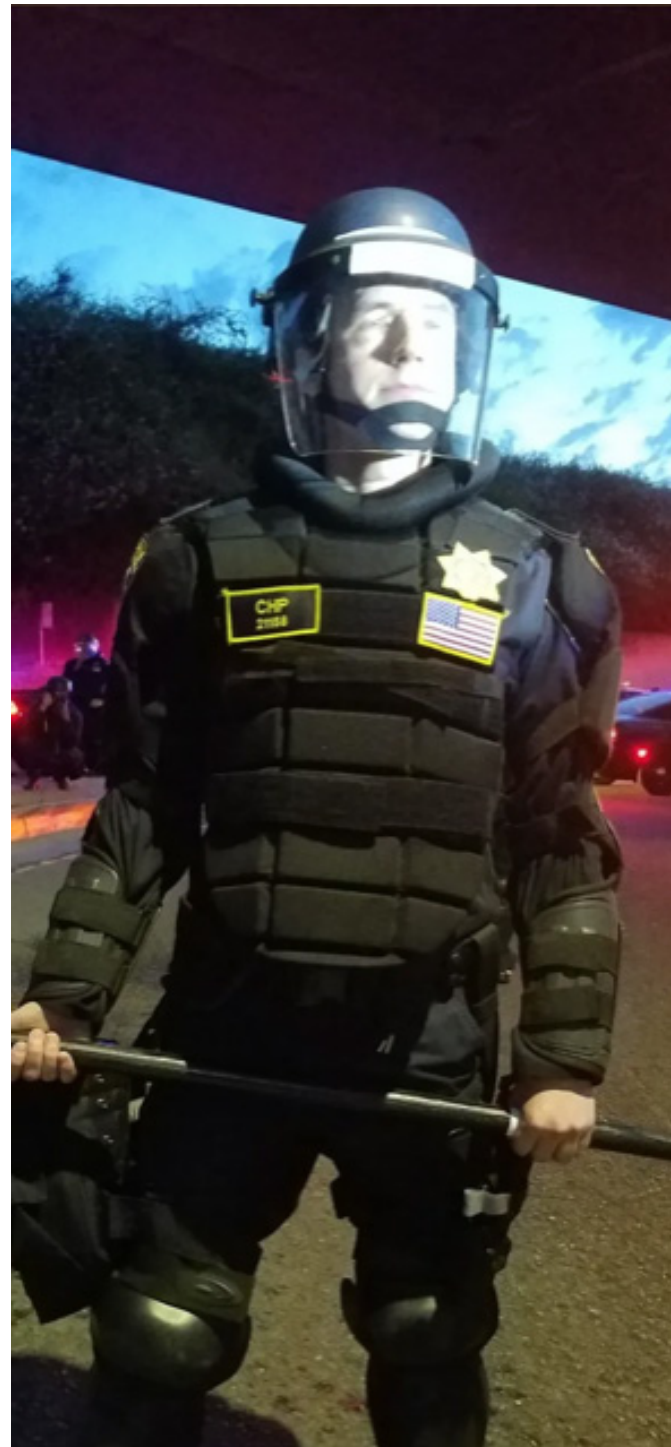
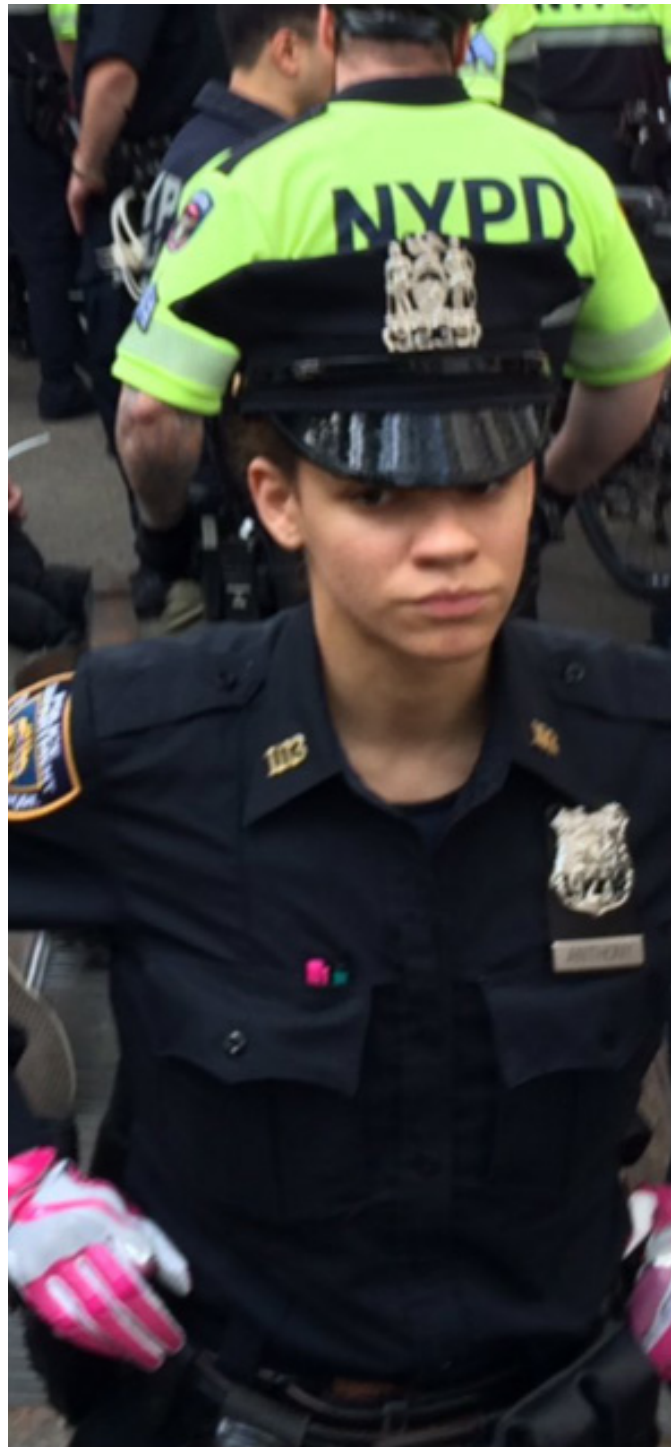
PrtScn features a selection of images from the project.



Cop Faces

Zach Shipko

I started taking these screenshots on my phone as a way to cope with the scary reality that each day the United States takes another step to becoming a literal police state. Capturing images of officers' faces as they violate people's rights feels like a microscopic form of accountability - maybe someone they know will see their photo in this context and it will prompt a conversation or maybe we could use AI to identify them in the future. Whatever the outcome, These images illustrate what is considered normal in the US today; the way some of these officers look shows that they are not remotely interested in protecting those they claim to protect. The police have become something like an occupying army.



From Sensor Anxiety to Restless Image Syndrome

Nima Bahrehmand

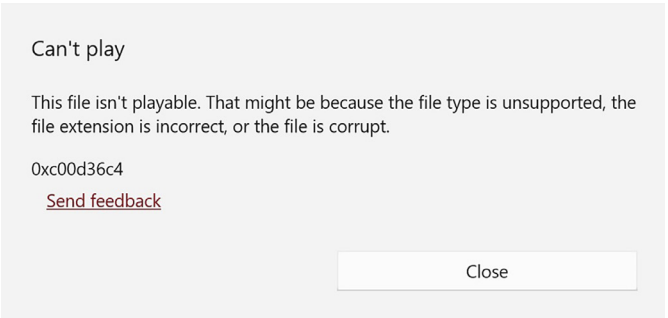
The Repression of Sensor

This story goes back six, seven or more years ago when I was living in Iran. One day, while I was looking out the window, I noticed an unusual dusty and smoky spot on the horizon not far from my place. I grabbed my camera and drove there. By the time I arrived, I felt the anxiety that has dominated every single element of the region... What an odd feeling! — Excavators and bulldozers were demolishing old buildings. The inhabitants stood still, anxiously gazing at the machines that were in the process of making them placeless.

I turned on my camera and started to document the situation. To find a perfect composition to document every detail— machines, buildings, and bodies— I took several steps back. I kept my distance far from the so-called urbanization operation to capture the moment in a wide shot. I did this to create a distance between myself and people, to only document the process of demolishing houses.

I barely remember if I tried to stop the deconstruction operation and protect the inhabitants.

Several days later, I plugged in my external hard drive to review the footage, an error message appeared on my screen:



The process of salvaging the damaged files was frustrating. Although I could open the video and the photos, the images were shattered and glitchy. Blue sky, dark smoke from the excavator's exhaust, and part of the machine's arm were the only recognizable

elements. All else was buried under a massive pile of pixels and grains (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: A frame of the glitched image as the result of sensor anxiety.

By only focusing on the aesthetics of the event, I was not conscious of the anxiety that dominated the region, a sentiment that contagiously transmitted to every element of the event. It moved from bulldozer and excavator operators' bodies to the defenseless inhabitants' bodies— from their bodies to my body, from my body into the camera sensor. Eventually, it affected the hard drive compression process, which caused glitches in the images of the event.

The dominant anxiety in the region had penetrated the camera sensor so much that it caused the image-making apparatus to unconsciously record information from the event that did not fit into its output logic.

The pixels and noises appear to act as a shield or cover to protect the images' information and prevent the details of the event from being exposed.

The demolition operated as a collage of fragments and detached elements; the glitchy images— the collection of fragmented pixels— represented the fully exposed-naked truth of the events. A repressive image.

Here, it is appropriate to talk about a recent historical photo in which the process of capturing an event turned the photo into a repressive image. On the evening of June 1, 2020, amid protests over George Floyd's murder in the United States, Donald Trump,

to show his authority and confidence, suddenly decided to take a walk from the White House to St. John's Church. Police used tear gas and other crowd control techniques to forcefully remove peaceful protesters from Lafayette Square and surrounding streets to create a path for Trump and his entourage. After massive repression and bloodshed, Trump held up a Bible in his hand and posed: a winner for the cameras.

Before this image of Trump was captured as a record of history, news cameras broadcast a short video that we can hardly remember today: a series of frames unevenly shown one after the other— part of the sky with fading branches of a tree, ground, running people, blurry bodies of the security members and bodyguards, and political figures. For about 3 minutes and 30 seconds, the world watched a series of depoliticized images on their screens. The camera oozed from its defined structures (it was depoliticized and de-aestheticized) but still sought to capture recognizable political figures, as usual (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Screenshots from the video of Donald Trump walking across Lafayette Park to St. John's Church.

What we watch is a moment when the camera subconsciously left its politicized shell and entered into the repressed space. At this moment the camera, rather than being a tool for recording the repression process, has become repressed. It has been distanced from

the institution of power (which is part of its structure) and approaches the repressed people. But instead of representing the repressed bodies, it has transmitted the repressed anxieties to us through its sensor.

Restless Image Syndrome

Technologies of vision have changed dramatically: from direct to indirect observation, from delayed to real-time reporting, and from still to full-motion imagery. Our first attempts to capture an image of the human body in motion were incapable of registering detail. Compare this with new technology such as the Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV), a sophisticated human-made semi-autonomous invader that flies in high-altitude and captures moment-by-moment all human movements on the ground.

The drone images emerge in front of the operator through a complex capturing, compressing, transmitting, and processing procedure which could give them a grainy and unclear quality. Nevertheless, we still trust these images. On one level, we trust in machines. On another one, as Hito Steyrel pointed out: not seeing anything intelligible is the new normal. Information is passed on as a set of signals that cannot be picked up by human senses.

The excerpt below from Bodies of Violence by Lauren Wilcox speaks directly to the aforementioned remarks: This 'myth' is the Cartesian mind/body separation that divorces vision and knowledge from bodies, and this myth is put into practice in the apparatus of precision bombing, in which the view from above becomes the absolute truth, the view from nowhere.

For around two decades, the Greater Middle East has become a practical lab to test and operate the UCAV. The majority of the region is under surveillance from above 24/7, and the region's inhabitants' bodies are being captured and processed as if they are nothing more

than pixels and grains. The satellite imagery of the region, which is publicly available, is kept at the pixel size of 50cm x 50cm, roughly corresponding to the dimensions of the human body. Their bodies' shadows have become the most crucial data for tracking their movement and behavior. Here, although bodies exist in every single frame of images, their value is reduced to algorithmic forms and information. Their function is examined with distorted and pixelated data.

The lives of people who live in the Middle East are being broadcast by politicized cameras and their bodies' images are being compressed and shattered by drones and satellites from a far distance, and networks of decentralized wars are going on in their land that, at some point, determine what they should and can be, and lock them in and out of their being. Anxiety is an integral part of Middle Easterners' lives.

How does a fragmented body record and broadcast a fragment of their fragmented life?

It has been over a year since I started screen-recording a live video broadcasting application called Periscope to search, study and archive the images that are broadcast by people who live in the middle east.

A world map filled with red and blue dots is the first image that popped up when I opened the Periscope (Red dots represent live broadcasts and blue dots the broadcasts that just ended). Scrolling up and down, left and right, zooming in and out around the world—clicking on blue and red dots—watching people who chose to record and broadcast fragments of their lives—the people who aimed to reach a large audience—a high number of followers/fans who dreamed of becoming visible.

I am on my chair, in my room, kilometers away from my home in the Middle East, maneuvering on the map of the region through Periscope. Searching for blue and red dots. Due to the digital divide, the abundance of blue and red spots is much less than in western countries. I need to zoom in and wait until the app loads some blue dots on the map. I click on one of them (Fig. 3).

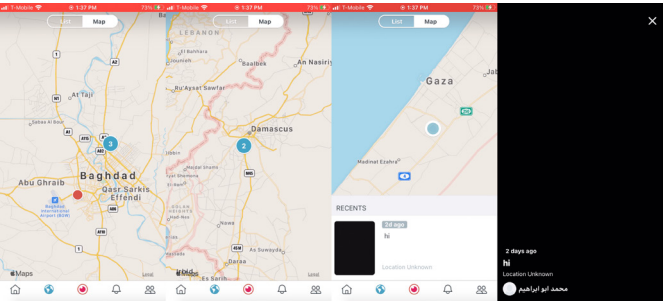


Fig. 3: Screenshots have been taken from Periscope.

My mobile screen gets dark, and pixels and grains slide on it. The sound of breathing can be heard. The video finishes in a couple of seconds. Then I click on another blue dot: part of the ceiling can be seen; suddenly the image changes very quickly and shows a window frame... a deserted alley... and a faint sound like shooting can be heard. This video will end in a few minutes. The anxiety governing the region has made these images so restless that it is difficult to read them.

Restless Image is inspired by a situation of image recording in which the whole apparatus - body and sensor - is fragile and anxious, causing slips of image. Restless Image demonstrates the friction between the body and the sensor in their effort to record necessary images.

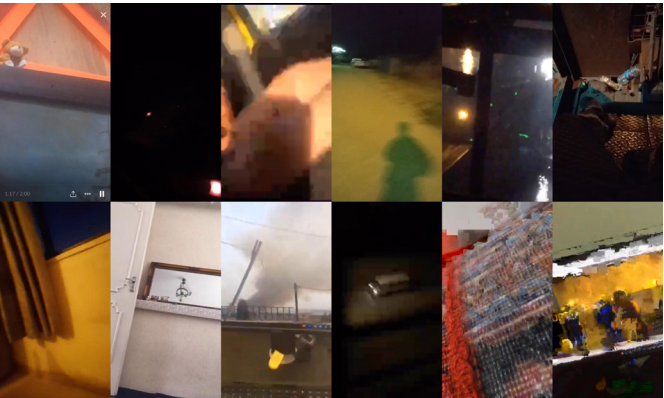


Fig. 4: Screenshots have been taken from Restless Image.

The image-maker feels an urgency to capture a moment whose outcome is unclear, whose language may be incomprehensible, whose sound may be unpleasant, and whose form may

not be readable/processable/legible/visible. They have no regard for capturing 'a beautiful image' or 'an informative image'. The image they capture lacks traditional entertainment value, charm, and inspiration. Their Restless Image is torn apart and forgotten by the repressive and savage digital system. The lifespan of such images is very short.

The primary impression made by Restless Image is one of lack: they are not entertaining or alluring. As a result, the viewer is led to dismiss and ignore them. Notwithstanding that their glitchy and shaky quality makes them hard to watch, Restless Images deserve more time.

Watch them and watch them again. Watch another one, watch the previous one, keep watching.

The Restless Image is a shriek of resistance with a touch of modesty. It is an excerpt that expresses the chaotic and obscure conditions of the contemporary moment of repression and destruction. Its form is raw and sincere: first-person images that force a confrontation with the repressed and fragmented bodies represented in the form of pixels and shadows by political cameras. The Restless Image was captured—not to be seen, not to be analyzed. By spending more time with it, it unfolds its ambiguous discourse and reveals its collective story.



Notes on ‘A Screenshot Odyssey’: A 200-days-long Performance

Paolo Bruzzo

A Screenshot Odyssey started with me posting ‘Day 1’ as a Facebook status on my personal profile on the evening of August 31, 2018. The following day, I took a screenshot of it and shared it with the description ‘Day 2’. The next day I made a screenshot of that screenshot, and posted it with the description ‘Day 3’. I continued to do this until March 18, 2019.

In the first five days, I took the screenshots with my computer. On day 6, I started taking them with my mobile phone while running the Facebook Android app, as it turned out to be handier, and eventually stuck with it.

As shown in the image, this resulted in an interesting effect, typical of ‘recursive screenshots’, which makes looking at the screenshots in rapid succession similar to walking down an aisle. The original ‘long screenshot’ progressed further day after day, before turning to a white point on the ‘horizon’ and seemingly disappearing.

These effects are pretty common in these kinds of screenshots. I actually think that the most peculiar aspect of my performance was its social nature. All of this was done on my personal profile entirely, with the people in my friend list being able to see and comment on the artwork taking shape in real time. It drew the attention of multiple people—some of whom I barely knew at the time and to whom I became ‘the screenshot guy’. When I met up with people, many of them asked why I was doing ‘that screenshot thing’ and whether it had a purpose. But I was doing it just because I felt like it. There was no proper reason, and I did not have a particular end planned. Everybody seemed to be curious about it, with some reacting to the new screenshot every single day and regularly commenting on it, especially in the days when the ‘white dot’ was starting to disappear. Bets were even made as to which exact day it would go.

After the white dot disappeared, it started to get a bit boring, though. There seemed to be no substantial difference between a new screenshot and the one from the day before. It now had become just a matter of commitment,

and I honestly started to feel pressure, as people were expecting me to upload a new screenshot every day. I had never thought that taking the commitment of posting on Facebook could get so stressful in the long run. It seemed to me as though I had ‘lost the right’ to take a break from social media.

In the end, I decided to announce that I would stop posting on March 18, 2019, after uploading the ‘Day 200’ screenshot. People were a bit sad, but they agreed it was time to pull the plug. However, even after three years, *A Screenshot Odyssey* is still regarded as some sort of legend by many people. I make nostalgic memes about it every now and then, always receiving positive reactions and comments from many of my Facebook friends. This publication is another nostalgic contribution to its memory that lives on until this day.



Has the Tweet Become a Meme?

Chloë Arkenbout

“We cannot have a meaningful revolution without humor.” – bell hooks

“If it doesn’t spread, it’s dead.” – Henry Jenkins

*“It is much easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of meme-culture.”
– Åke Gafvelin*

The days where memes were plain image macros (an image that consists out of an image combined with text) are long behind us. New meme formats, some more obscure than others, are popping up like weeds. Memetic logics are also moving beyond the image into ‘the real world’ (whatever that may be), but that’s a story for another time.

In January 2022, when I was a participant in the Digital Methods Winter School of the University of Amsterdam, my teammates and I came to an interesting conclusion. Inspired by the forthcoming paper by Richard Rogers and Giulia Giorgi, called ‘What is a Meme Technically Speaking’, we analyzed various meme collections taken from different software environments.¹ After a close reading of the dominant types of images, their ontology and epistemology, one of the most interesting findings, at least for me, was that our meme datasets were full of tweet screenshots – which felt rather counterintuitive at first. However, once I started thinking about it, I realized that I have been noticing meme admins posting tweet screenshots on their pages for months now. One of my meme muses even told me that she did not know what her meme page has become, seeing all the tweets and other content she has been sharing lately. It had me wondering. When leaving the technical and data driven context aside for a minute, has the tweet in its screenshot form become a viral image? Has the tweet become an actual *meme*?

It Be Like That Sometimes

I think everyone would agree that the most important characteristic of a meme is humor. Just like a meme, a tweet screenshot has a limited amount of space to get its point across. In fact, it has even less space in the screenshot itself, than in the context of Twitter where a tweet could be seen in the context of a retweet or a tweet thread. Recognizability and relatableness are important aspects of a successful meme, so it makes sense that a lighthearted, catchy tweet can have the exact same effect when reading it. It only makes sense that these are screenshotted and reshared on different platforms. Haven’t we all had moments in life where we would recognize the situations sketched in the tweets that are screenshotted and shared by @mytherapistsays, as illustrated in Fig 1.1 – 1.3? It does really be like that sometimes.



Fig. 1.1 – 1.3: Tweet screenshots that address mental health issues in a humorous and relatable way, screenshotted from @mytherapistsays on Instagram.

¹ Richard Rogers and Giulia Giorgi, ‘What is a meme, technically speaking?’, Unpublished paper 2022.

Mainstream Media Counter Strategies

So tweet screenshots are *funny*. That does not necessarily make them a meme. They do, however, share another memetic quality; they have the potential to critique oppressive political discourses. In the Critical Meme Reader, an INC reader published in 2021, Anahita Neghabat explains that mainstream media often produce hegemonic, sexist, racist, classist or otherwise marginalizing and violent views, by uncritically reproducing problematic arguments, generalizations, and vocabulary in an effort to report ‘neutrally’.² Neghabat deliberately uses memes herself to intervene in public discourse. She uses them as her method of choice because memes are simple enough to reach a broad audience, yet at the same time are sufficiently sophisticated to stimulate critical thinking. According to her, memes can confront oppressive discourses by presenting alternative interpretations and narratives in an educational context. In this way, memes are a tool to reject the whole logic of exclusive, elitist, top-down knowledge production commonly performed by hegemonic, established media and political institutions. As Henry Jenkins states, top-down hierarchies of broadcast media now coexist with the integrated system of participatory channels which have increased access to tools for communication.³ The meme is a perfect example of this.

The tweet screenshot works in the exact same way. When taken out of their platform of origin through the act of a screenshot to be shared more widely on other platforms to inform others, such as Instagram or WhatsApp groups, the tweet takes on a new dimension. When transformed into an image, the tweet gets a new layer of virality because of its potential to travel across platforms. And exactly that potential is important for spreading counter information to oppressive discourses in mainstream media, in order to dialectically change people’s views.

Take these examples below from @linksinhetnieuws, @gratis_saaf_voor_iedereen and @commie__central. All of them are Dutch political Instagram accounts that push for leftist and progressive thought. A **trigger warning** is in place here, because one of these examples deals with rape and pedophilia. In Fig 2.1 @linksinhetnieuws shares a tweet screenshot from Nina Hosseini which makes readers aware of the fact that the Dutch government values the economic market more than people’s health, in context of the current Covid crisis. In Fig 2.2 @gratis_saaf_voor_iedereen shares his own tweet as a screenshot (admittedly, he has been known to cite himself), where he states that he finds it remarkable that there are people out there who do not immediately become anti-capitalists after reading the heading of a Dutch news article that mentions the ten richest people in the Netherlands doubling their capital. In Fig 2.3 @commie__central shares a tweet screenshot from Lyra Willow Daya, which points out that calling the rape of an eleven-year-old child a ‘sex date’ is extremely problematic.

These tweet screenshots shared in an Instagram post have been frequently shared by other Instagram users, reaching a broader audience than the tweet in its original, unscreenshotted form would have had within the platform borders of Twitter, thus increasing their potential political power. As Jenkins explains, the spreadability of a media object refers to the technical resources that make it easier to circulate some kinds of content than others – in this way the act of the screenshot can be seen as a new affordance that increases the virality potential of a tweet.

In his work on the screenshot, Paul Frosh states that screenshots are often used as journalistic evidence. In turn, Twitter is frequently deployed by journalists to spread information. Frosh explains that by capturing the tweet, the screenshot simultaneously entails the ontological commonality of Twitter as a witnessable world and transforms the tweet into an event in and of that world.⁴ Using a screenshot of a tweet, as a direct bottom-up tool for countering mainstream media, gives marginalized groups back their agency, and makes the tweet screenshot, in fact, a form of meta journalism with a memetic viral potential.

² Anahita Neghabat, ‘Ibiza Austrian Memes: Reflections on Reclaiming Political Discourse through Memes’, In Chloë Arkenbout, Jack Wilson and Daniel de Zeeuw (Eds.), *Critical Meme Reader: Global Mutations of the Viral Image*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2021, pp. 130–142.

³ Henry Jenkins et al, *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*, New York and London: New York University Press, 2013.

⁴ Paul Frosh, *The Poetics of Digital Media*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019.



Fig. 2.1 – 2.3: Tweet screenshots that critique Dutch political developments, screenshotted from @linksinhetnieuws, @gratis_saaf_voor_iedereen and @commie_central on Instagram. Fig. 2.1: “Every time I spend 77 euros for a new stock of FFP2 masks for my family and me, I think of the government that lets them go to waste somewhere because giving them away would ‘disrupt the market’.” Fig 2.2: “I find it remarkable that, apparently, there are people who read headlines like this and then do not immediately become anti-capitalist. – The headline: Oxfam: capital of the 10 richest men has doubled during the covid pandemic.” Fig 2.3: “Used word: ‘sex date’. What is means: ‘pedophilic rape. The headline: ChristenUnie (a Dutch political party) suspends councilor because of sex date with an 11 year old girl.”

A New Image Macro

Sure, the tweet screenshot has the same mechanisms of humor and relatability as a meme, and it has the same potential for bottom-up political counter narratives. Could tweet screenshots be seen as memes in their pure and unremixed form, then? Perhaps not, as similar qualities do not necessarily equal them being actual memes themselves. However, tweet screenshots do become truly memetic when they also play with layers and symbols. Obviously, memes are characterized by their DIY character and their remixability. Creating endless references to references, making the seemingly simple internet image actually very sophisticated. To be fair, remixing a tweet screenshot in the literal sense seems an unlikely practice, as there are usually no images involved. Not to mention that twisting the words of the original tweet writer does not seem ethical at all and could potentially create fake news (or should I say deep fake?) scenarios, where words are put out of context, or worse, put into someone’s mouth.

However, when the tweet screenshot is viewed as an image, it *can* be remixed memetically. Jenkins says that in the age of spreadability, the public is not simply consuming preconstructed messages, but they are shaping, reframing and remixing media content in ways which might not have been previously imagined. Or as Marcus Boon puts it, memes are there to be copied, to be fragmented and to be juxtaposed; to break a whole and resemble it into something new.⁵ In fact, according to Jenkins, as material spreads, it gets remade; either literally, through various forms of sampling and remixing, or figuratively via its insertion into ongoing conversations and across various platforms. The tweet screenshot does both of these. Scott H. Church also agrees and states that a remix requires the participation of the user to alter the original cultural artifact.⁶ This is exactly what meme makers, such as @ahistoryofmalice, as shown in Fig. 3. – 3.3, are doing, when they remix tweet screenshots with other images. They combine the classic image macro meme format with the tweet screenshot, allowing for a new meme format to emerge, which I’d like to call the *tweet image macro*. In tweet image macros, the text over image format, as seen in the classic image macro, has evolved into a text-based image (the tweet screenshot) over an image. In this way, the tweet screenshot is given a new memetic creative dimension and the meme is, ontologically (but also technically) speaking, given a new format.

⁵ Marcus Boon, *In Praise of Copying*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.

⁶ Scott H Church, “All Living Things are DJs: Rhetoric, Aesthetics, and Remix Culture”, PhD diss., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2013.



Fig. 3.1 – 3.3: Tweet Image Macro’s, screenshotted from @ahistoryofmalice on Instagram.

The Tweet as Viral Image

Has the tweet become a meme? No. However, the tweet screenshot has absolutely become a viral image with memetic qualities. When immortalized through the act of the screenshot, the tweet is allowed to travel across its previously defined platform boundaries, increasing its potential for virality, political promise and remixability. The birth of the tweet image macro has proven the ever-changing ontological state of meme culture. One could even speculate about meme research evolving from a more niche vernacular type of research into a wider mode of viral image analysis. What’s next? A screenshot of a tweet screenshot in a tweet screenshot, used in a tweet image macro which also consists of a tweet screenshot? I would definitely screenshot that.



Fig. 4: A sad excuse for an attempt of the author to create a meta tweet screenshot to go memetically viral. Apparently @gratis_saaf_voor_iedereen is not the only one who cites themselves.

Screenshot, Present Continuous

Yoana Pavlova

I don't have any photos in my wallet, but my phone's memory is full of screenshots. They are no longer images per se—more like a pile of sentimental memorabilia, or better yet silent bystanders of my attempt to cure the soaring media-fueled anxiety through haptic control. Screenshots as heralds of serendipity, screenshots as témoins of my flirtation with time and duration, screenshots of multiple thinkpieces about screenshots. These files harken back to the material origins of cartography as a meaning-making practice. For what is a screencapture if not 'a pocket-map' to fit into our palms, a piece of the internet rendered visible and human, one that our eyes can actually encompass.

Long before animated emoticons or ready-made sets of GIFs, print screened images from movies, TV shows, and text-based or graphical-adventure games helped build contemporary pop culture as we know it: crowdsourced and fugal. Not the official stills companies released to promote their product but specific frames viewers/players found more expressive, relevant, and somehow compelling. By adding text to screenshots, or frolicking with the original, some of them became legendary memes, such as *All Your Base Are Belong To Us or It's A Trap*. Text was still a prominent element in 90s video games, and closed captions and SDH subtitles were slowly turning into a norm. This only expanded screengrabs' cultural convertibility, in a moment when English was already the lingua franca of the internet. Uploaded via painfully slow dial-up connection to paid or free hosting servers, then subsequently shared on chats, forums, and blogs as personal messages, these pictures gradually transitioned from the symbolic to the semiotic as the web grew larger and more sophisticated.

By the start of this century, circumventing DVD or Blu-ray copyright protection via torrents and then streaming, as well as the rise of MMORPG games, have made screen grabbing much easier, even *encouraged* in a society where media consumption has conflated with one's identity and the tools for

articulating this identity have never been more accessible. In 2017 Vulture published "*The Rise of the No-Context Screenshot*"¹, speculating about the 'distinct flavor' and 'escape velocity' screenshots gained that year. The aggravated dynamics of political life in the USA, along with the burgeoning consolidation of media giants defied solely by the fantasy of deplatforming and unraveling the prevailing yarn, catalyzed the rise of *no-context everything*, with the production (and sabotage) of meaning landing 'in the hands of the proletariat'.

The first year of Donald Trump's presidency with his mercurial presence on post-truth Twitter, the introduction of Stories on Facebook and Instagram (and the ensuing FOMO) and the loom of consequence culture all have upset the online public dialogue and increased the epistemic value of screencaptures. Carried on the tidal waves of discourse, gathered under the many gonfalons of culture and cohort wars, chanting 'screenshots or it didn't happen', we've learned to read these images like palmistry, both with their 'documentary' (dark or light mode, status bar, pop-up notifications, battery charge percentage, time stamp, resolution) and 'fictional' (crop style, blurring, underlining, drawing, stickers, filters) features. By the same clairvoyance, machine vision can now search 'inside' screencaptures, as if they are no more than notes, yet there is more than meets the artificial eye.

Evidentiality

There was a time when screenshots were the bread and butter of Fandom Tumblr, as well as Tumblr fandom. Most memes were handcrafted by savvy users with the help of Photoshop or other software for desktop computers, yet the web still looked horizontal and equal. The latest generation of AI-powered social media has reshuffled the means not only of hosting

and curating media but also of policing access. There is an app for everything nowadays, and once we open it on our smartphone, we fall into a geolocalized rabbit hole. The so-called 'browsing experience' is not only unique, personal, and idiosyncratic, it is in fact a lonely act bordering on solipsism, with a sleight of hands automatically restructuring the feed as soon as our finger pauses for a second. At their most fundamental, screenshots bear witness of what one sees in order to share it with the others.

The necessity to disclose this PoV has mutated even further with the trend to post cringe-flavored screen grabs from one's text messages, DMs, and group chats. In addition, the pandemic has only accelerated the gargantuan hunger for counter-IP entertainment. Amid this bewildering abundance, screencaptures can serve as a beacon, as long as they are paired with a recognizable tag—among the most acclaimed examples is #ScreenshotSaturday that has been used by indie game developers to showcase their work for years. Screen captures can also become an archival apparatus to counter the ongoing 'rotting' of URLs (as Jonathan Zittrain pointed out in *The Atlantic*²), and academia has been increasingly propitious when it comes to such citing sources. For everything else there's Pinterest.

Proprietorship

As writer Kelly Pendergrast reflects in "Screen Memories"³ at Real Life: "The screen consumes so much of me — time, labor, attention. I screenshot to lay claim to the act of seeing, which remains mine alone." In this sense, screenshots are a way to feint engagement algorithms by not allowing them

to pwn one's statement and appropriate a chunk of the share. Let's admit it, though, in the gambit of lurking, blocking, and mining for potentially sensitive content in exchange of viral likes, screengrabs have converted into an expensive currency. Within the framework of consequence culture and the newly acquired appetite for direct socio-economic justice, the forensic value of an image "proving" what people said, or did, or said that someone else did has skyrocketed. Gotta be quick on the draw in this New West of fleeting capital.

The interesting part is that a profitable screen capture does not have to be one's *own*. At present, .jpg and .png screenshots wear their font aliasing as a badge of honor, for most of them have been edited on very different devices, and by many different people. The vibe is quirky and messy, whereas the result feels both intimate and widely relatable. The vernacularity of this manufacture follows the same logic as 'audiovisual capitalism,'⁴ only the benefits are more intangible. Still, the 2021 NFT craze together with the climate crisis' visibility have made us profoundly reconsider our affair with images, poor and rich, as well as their actual cost. Along with the state-of-the-art economy rising out of nihilism (literally), renewed robinhoodian impulses have materialized too, with screenshots as a precarious emanation of this phenomenon.

Meaning-montaging

Gazing at a simple screenshot may lead to various Gestalt insights based on one's cultural background and personal experience, and these differences should play a big part of our conversation about art today. From the found poetry spun out of Google search results to the endearing dada glitches as we eye our phones-cum-sandboxes from God's PoV, we all wear invisible hermeneutical mantle that

1 Kathryn VanArendonk, 'The Rise of the No-Context Screenshot', *Vulture* (December 21, 2017), <https://www.vulture.com/2017/12/the-rise-of-the-no-context-screenshot.html>.

2 Jonathan Zittrain, 'The Internet Is Rotting' *The Atlantic*, (June 30, 2021), <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2021/06/the-internet-is-a-collective-hallucination/619320/>.

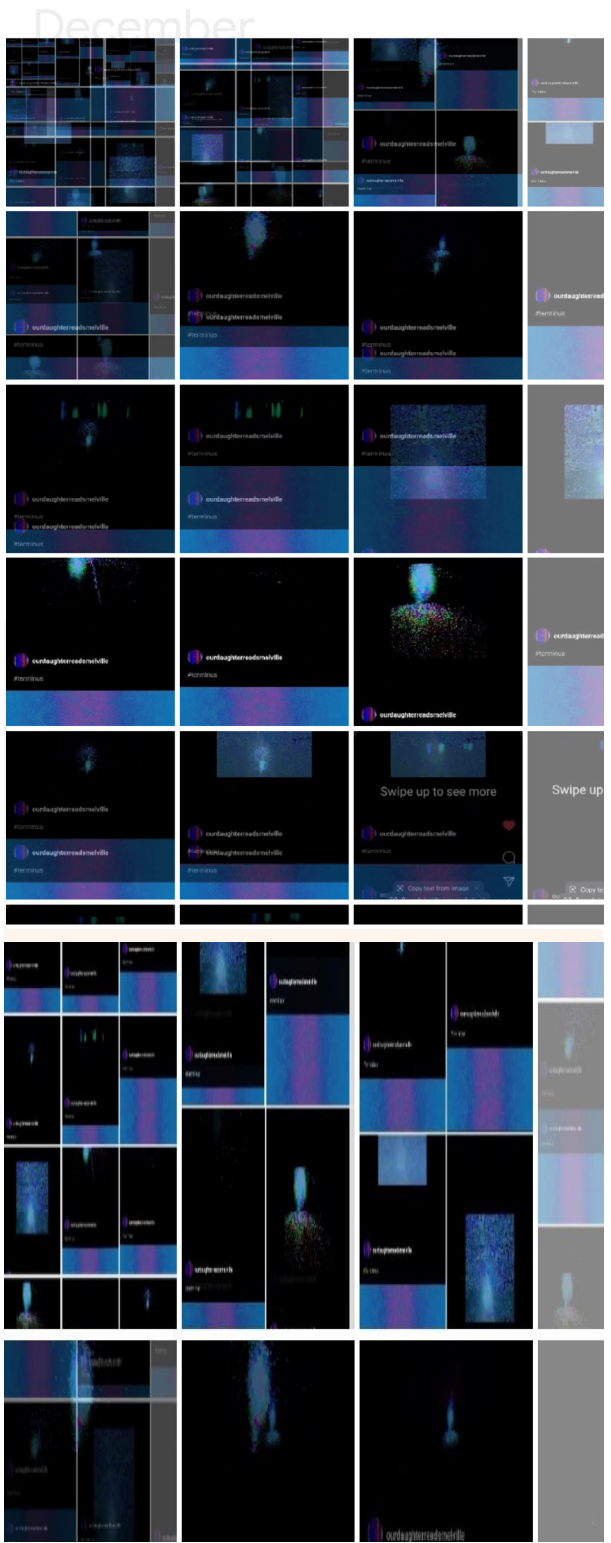
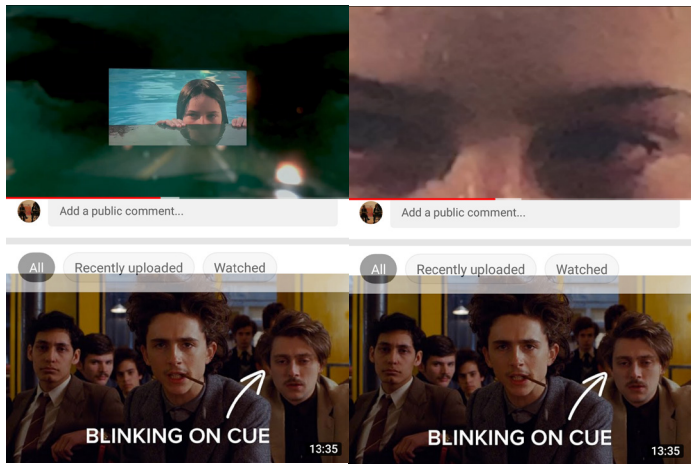
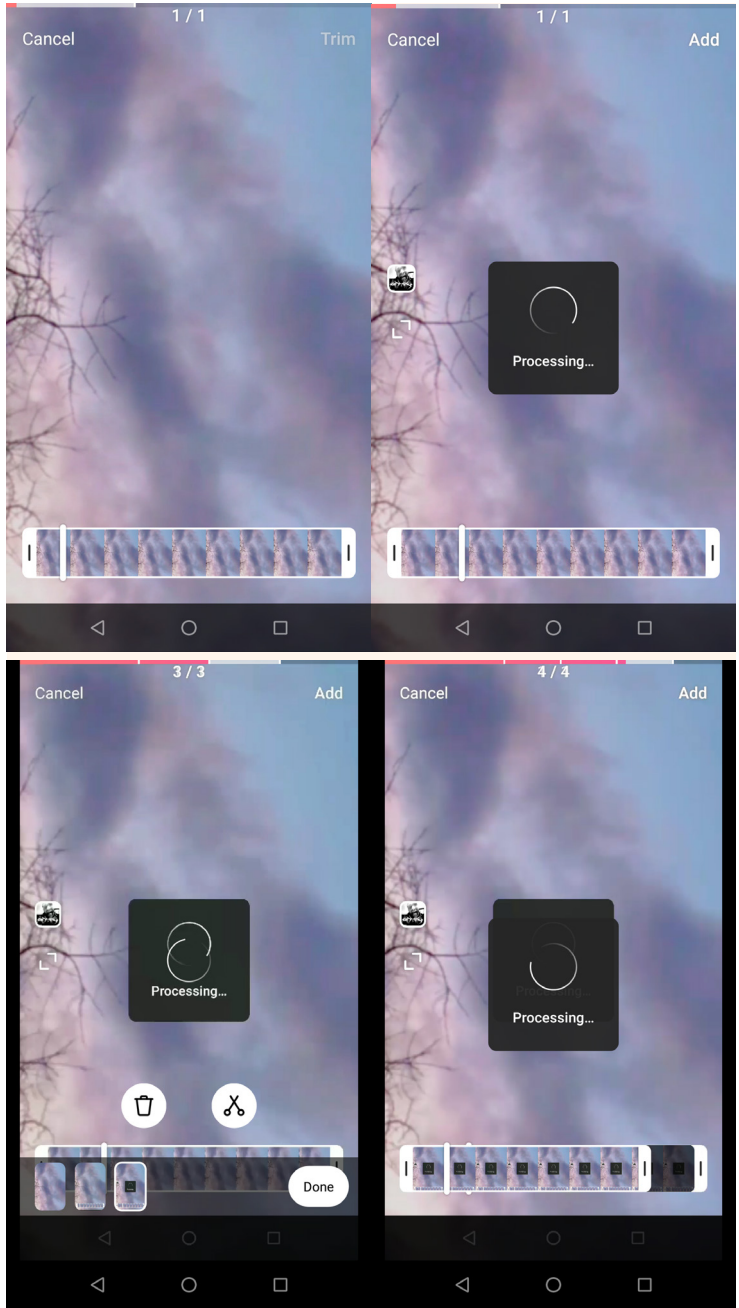
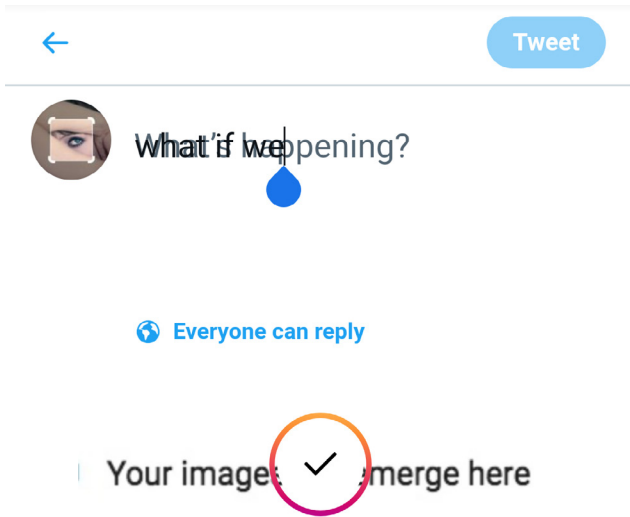
3 Kelly Pendergrast, 'Screen Memories', *Real Life*, (January 14, 2021), <https://reallifemag.com/screen-memories/>.

4 Hito Steyerl, 'In Defense of the Poor Image', *e-flux* 10, (November 2009), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/>.

transforms us into DIY artists. Intellectual montage is no more about the still darkness of cinema; it is about our daily interactions with mixed types of media, all simultaneous. When we screencapture what appears to be the surface, we also catch a glimpse of the multiple layers beneath, or even XR in the ether. But then the modern Web is woven out of so many overlapping interfaces and background scripts, every time we press a key or caress the touchscreen, it is they who make a screenshot of us, one that encapsulates not only technical but also personal data.

Merely being aware of all these parallel dimensions at play allows for an informed response that can vary from phenomenological meditation to connotation bombing. A screenshot is pretty much like Duchamp's urinal — repurposed ready-made that can be either hammered or admired, depending on the beholder and the setting. “Some memes write themselves,” yet nothing compares to the feel-good sensation of VJing to the rhythm of the internet, especially at a point when the real world seems so ungovernable. And this appears to be the sentiment driving many to do the same. Some of the most famous out-of-context screengrab series came to be as pet projects during the pandemic, others snowballed into popularity right after our life became a desktop documentary. Eradicating the existing notion of territoriality and momentum, the sum of these images charts a stratum of freedom.

Our obsession with screencaptures is undoubtedly a utopian desire for clear lines and a participatory involvement. A quick reading of GAN's molten entrails shows that the Internet is about to change soon, with AI's black-box future patently ahead of us. With the screenshot still being the most democratic form of media relation and appropriation, it is worth exploring its role as a building block of meaning as well as admiring its Tarot-like fairness, before we keep playing with simulacra any further.



Screenshots of Despair

Josh Kimball



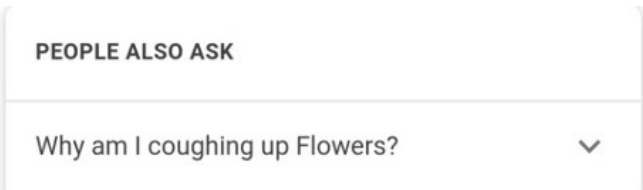
It is empty here.

Before I started the screenshots of despair blog, I spent a lot of time just wandering around my digital existence.

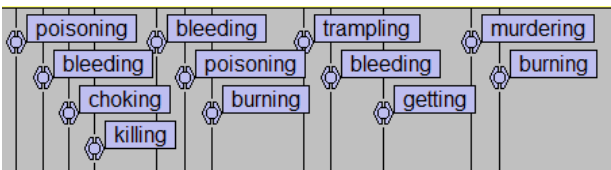
You are the only one here

GOOD TO KNOW

It was easy to feel disconnected, even when other people were around.



Often, the online world feels like a hostile place.



I saw weird things.



Please sign up for more free executions.

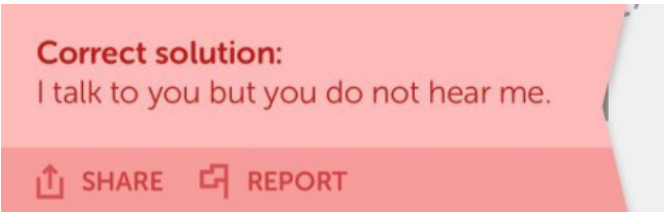
People are constantly trying to coax you into doing things.



The pressures of putting on a digital persona are often overwhelming.



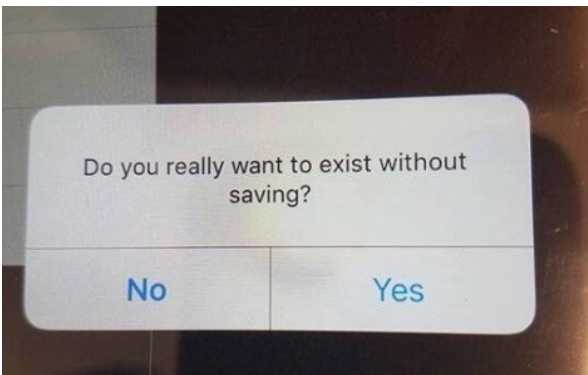
And it's easy to get confused about who you really are.



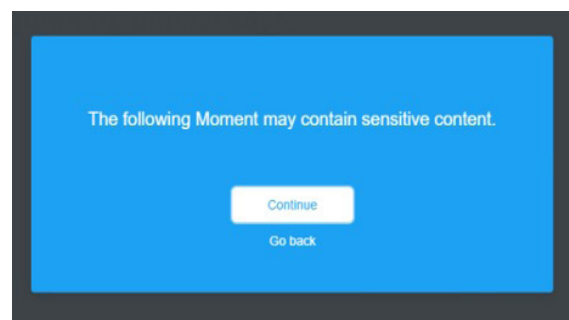
All too often, I felt like I was shouting into a void.



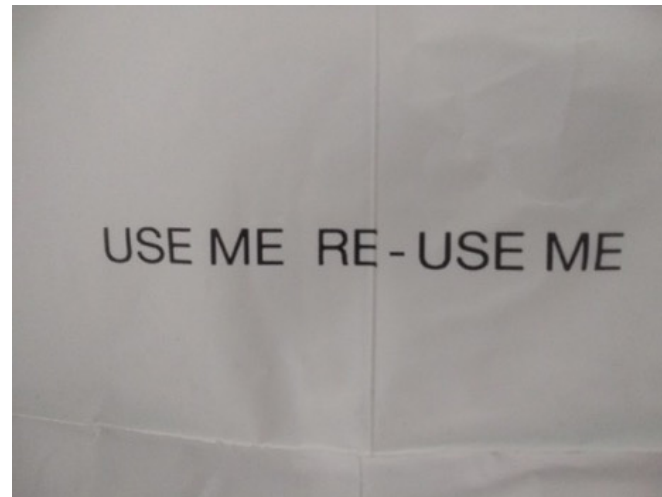
But then something occurred to me:



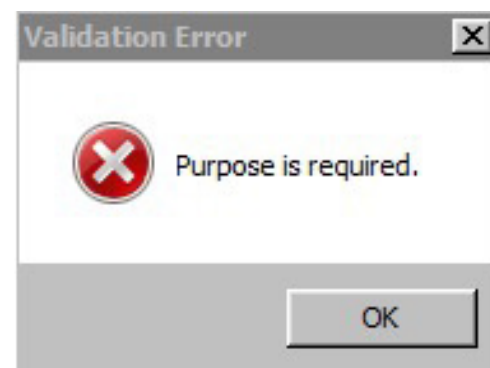
The digital world need not only be ephemeral.



With a more nuanced reading, maybe one could extract some humanity from the digital moments we were experiencing.



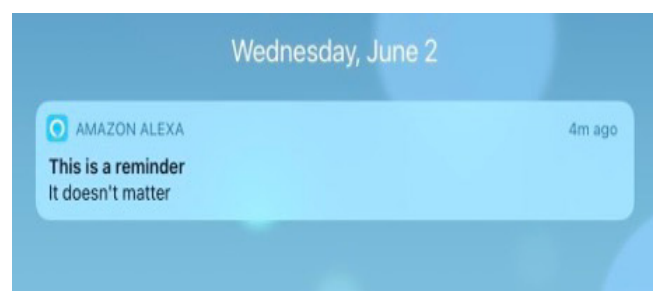
By capturing a screenshot, maybe we could remove text from its context in order to see it anew.



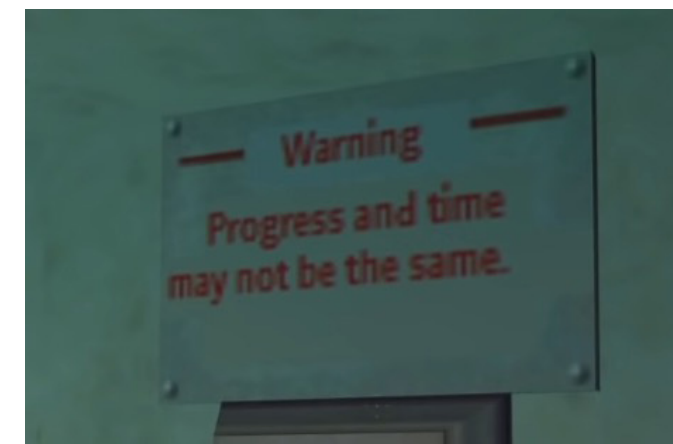
Once I started posting images within the frame of a tumblr blog, the idea of reading the screenshots in a different way made sense to other people, as well.

Desperate for Answers™ • 9 years

But one must ask: do these screenshots help us understand the world any better?



Can any intellectual, societal or spiritual meaning be read into the decontextualized words taken from constantly changing screens?



Just because something sticks around, does that imbue it with meaning?



It's hard to say.



Maybe beyond all of us simply experiencing this often-bizarre digital existence...



...what's important is that we see it collectively.

Screenshot in Translation

Gottfried Haider

I would like to offer a perspective on the screenshot as a remnant of expatriate life in China—born not so much out of digital flâneurship and joyous holding-on to screen contents, but instead out of the recurring need to navigate apps and forms, whose inscriptions only reveal themselves through translation. In the utilitarian context of life abroad, the screenshot becomes the interface to a rudimentary legibility enabled by translation apps, and the navigating of the everyday. The ultimate accumulation of screenshots in one's phone photo library, shows a whole spectrum of mediated existence: from the routine food delivery app to the anxiety related to entering detailed biographic data into forms quickly.

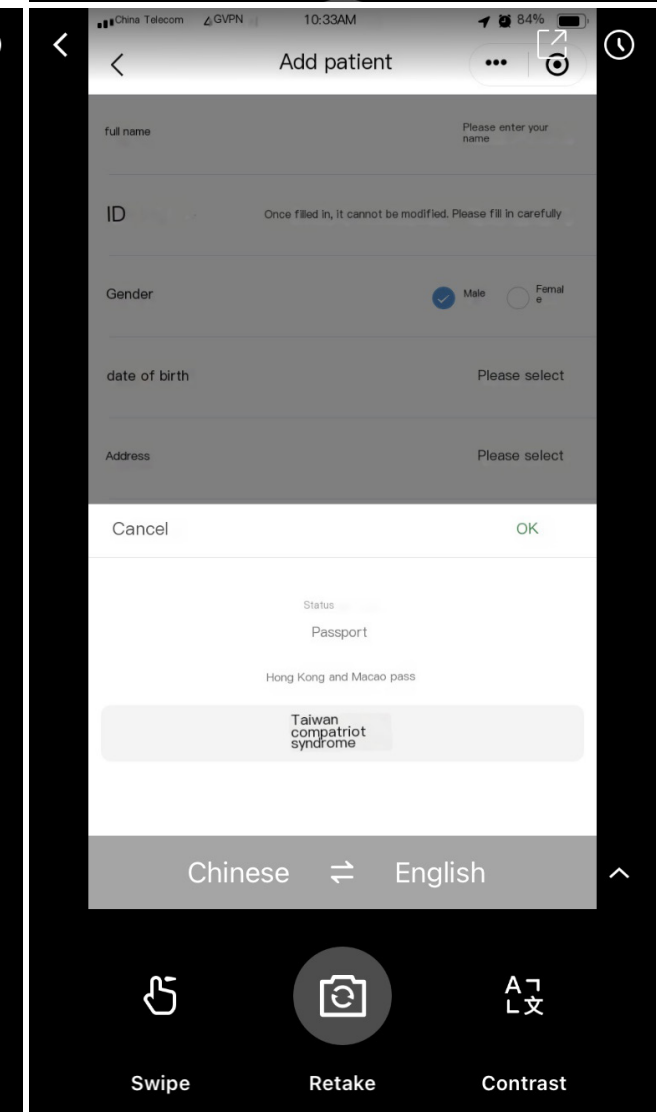
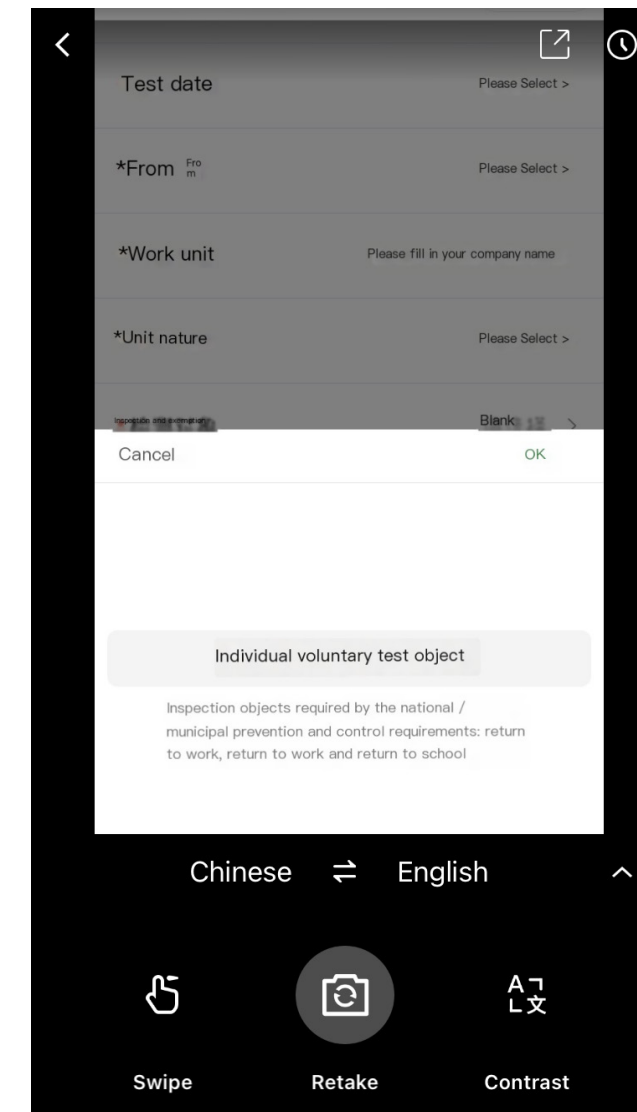
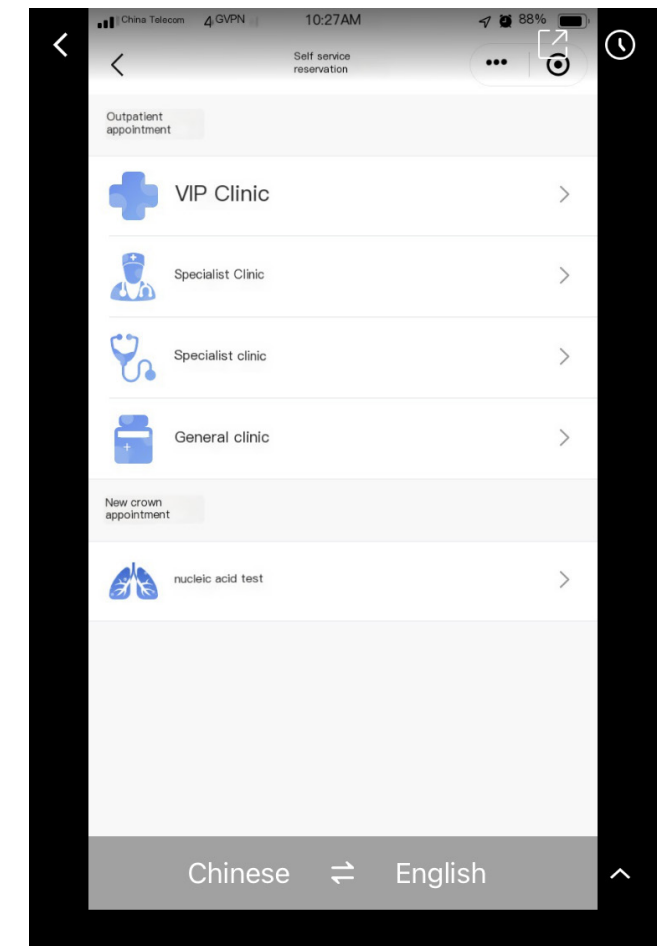
In the specific locale of China, it is hard to overstate the degree in which daily life is intertwined with different smartphone apps, which typically exist as 'Mini-Apps' inside the realms of WeChat or AliPay that are run by conglomerates Tencent and Alibaba respectively. Whether sitting down at a restaurant, or joining a queue to get Covid-tested, this human-digital relationship generally involves scanning a QR code to launch a 'Mini-App', which leads the user through a series of prompts, forms, and menus to be filled out. The goal is to place the desired lunch order, or to have the health clinic administer the test.

Any seasoned, yet painfully illiterate, expat-user will have learned to discern 'Terms and Conditions' equivalents from their visual appearance alone. Through experience, users have developed an intuitive understanding of common menu structures, such as what is behind the 'user' icon (generally shown in a circular frame). Yet there is some trepidation that results from the possibility of entering into an unwanted but binding purchase or subscription, which these apps readily make available. In such situations that call for a vital understanding of textual elements, one contorts the hand to capture what is on the screen, as a screenshot. A series of swipes and clicks, deeply ingrained into muscle memory, leads the user away towards a translation app. There, the screenshot is located and used by the optical character recognition (OCR) and translation engines in order to do their best to unlock meaning for the illiterate user.

To have the screenshot be the pivotal element in this moment is a funny twist in user interface history: in the text-only mode of past computer systems, the 'Print Screen' key on the computer keyboard was used to send text on the screen to an attached printer, as paper-printsouts were still the most useful way of saving and handling information on a screen. (The first IBM PC from 1981 included such a key, labeled 'PrtSc', and it has remained a keyboard command ever since.) With the advent of graphical user interfaces and the computer mouse, this common command instantly fell by the wayside, in favor of the common operations of Select, Copy and Paste. Computer operating systems enforced universal access to those actions (with certain exceptions, e.g. games and CD-ROMs) and consistency in their operation. The web today, so long as we access it through a computer, is still based on the idea of text selection, and the uniformity of the context menu (as evident in the 'right-click savers' meme surrounding NFTs).

On mobile phones, however, Apple isn't enabling users to copy and paste in a universal way. Instead, application developers are able to control which text is selectable, and which context menu to show after a so-called 'touch and hold gesture', the equivalent of the right mouse click. With Apple privileging their revenue-sharing producers' desire for control over those of its users, this means in the context of popular apps in China, users routinely have no way of capturing Chinese characters on the screen. Access to those characters, and the meaning behind them, is once again going through the digital equivalent of printing out the screen contents to a sheet of paper. For iPhone users, this regression to a pre-graphical function of the screenshot remains a daily source of friction—memorialized in the many screenshots on users' phones, stressful flashbacks of having to fill out forms pressed for time in a queue, and similar anxiety-filled moments.

A future version of iOS might put an end to this peculiar dance of repeated screenshotting and app-switching. But until then, just press the side and the home button...

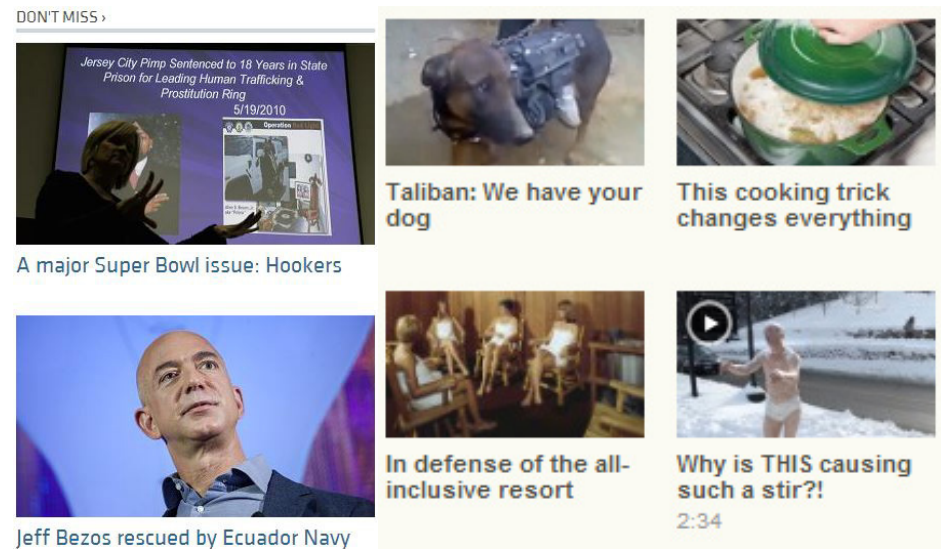


Newsgrabs

Maxwell Neely-Cohen



For four years, from 2013–2016, I took dozens of screenshots of news headlines and article rankings. I have no idea how it started. I had just finished writing my first novel and maybe I was trying to get a sense of the world, and gearing up to write the next one (something I still have not done). Instead, what I ‘grabbed’ was a perfect portrait of the chaos of those years; the total destruction of a paradigm of media as it ran into the business of the internet, the tabloidification and monetization of all things, the invention and maturation of sponcon and clickbait, the loss of any and all plots.



The folders still exist in the caverns of my Dropbox, layered deep within a folder called ‘Newsgrabs’ within a folder called ‘Screengrabs’ within a folder called ‘Aesthetic’. When viewed together, they portray an unhinged and degenerating world, something that could never be summarized in a novel or a movie, yet is often as fictional as it is non-fictional. A nightmare mixture of prophecy, oblivion, grift, and fear.



BREAKING NEWS Kim Jong Un has your attention

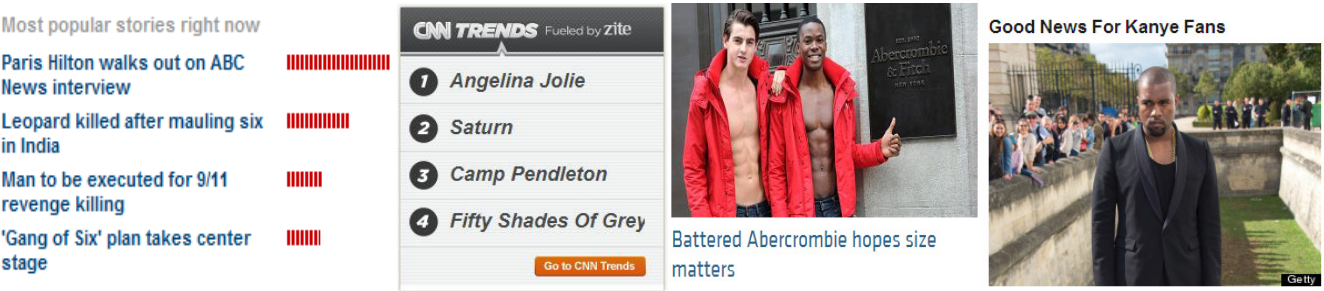


Top 10 highest paid CEOs

NEWS FOR YOU

- Snoop Dogg busted by drug-sniffing dog in Norwegian airport
- Texas man accused of starting to eat dog arrested
- See Ann Curry's Tearful Goodbye From Today Show [VIDEO]

Why did I keep them? Why have I kept them? Why did I stop taking them sometime in 2016, as ad blockers got better, as my media habits changed, as apps overtook browsers and I surrendered to networks mediating homepages?



I view them now as an archive, presented in a better way than news articles are typically cataloged. Look up an article from any archive and database from this time and it will be stripped of the context that shows the way the user would have seen it. The desperation of its hosts, the changes in design, a shifting color here, a typeface there, sidebars and headers and chyrons and traffic rankings by algorithms which are long dead.

They are a graveyard.

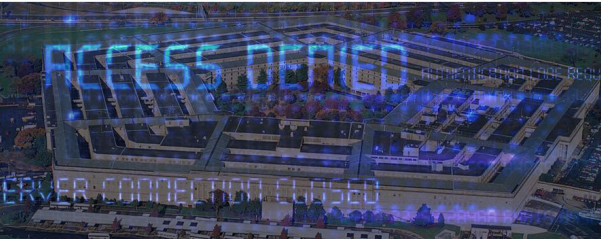
The screenshot when combined with a news site allows us to fix time and space, unleash a collage that a history book could never arrive at. We see governments battle over fears that never come to be, fights stuck on repeat until adolescence, all while publisher and reader struggle for supremacy or survival.

Neo-Nazis Consider Taylor Swift Their “Aryan Goddess”

Team USA Basketball Players Reportedly End Up in Brothel While Looking for Spa

XoJane Actually Just Published a Personal Essay Called “It Happened to Me: My Friend Joined ISIS”

PENTAGON: CYBER ATTACKS ARE ACTS OF WAR



'Shut Down Our Power Grid, Maybe We Will Put A Missile Down One Of Your Smokestacks'

The only universal is the desperation for clicks. So instead of clicking, for four years, I screenshotted. I captured them in ice instead of giving them the data. The metric. The new oil. So they now sit frozen, proof of receipt, in my little section of the cloud and my little physical backup of electrified rocks. And occasionally, maybe once or twice a year, I see something and my fingers find the shortcut. I still add to the folder. I surf and I freeze.

Visible Cities

Maša Seničić

a plastic hose poised in a vicious coil; even the too-fixed stare of the wide windows give momentary access to the landscape behind or under the future cracks in the plaster

(Fig.1) Margaret Atwood, *The City Planners*

If the new memoir is our browser history¹ could a city's transient virtual memoir be a history of its Google Street View or its Satellite View? The raw approach of these services—exclusively archival and practical, but at the same time unapologetically ethnographic—allows places to prevail for quite some time after they've been destroyed or renovated to the point of being unrecognizable. In the past two years, it has become painfully obvious that Google Maps and Google Street View irreversibly changed the way we travel the world, choose our routes and explore selected destinations before we get to them, even if we eventually never do. The inconsistency is in the screen itself, as the only movement belongs to our cursor sliding across the outdated landscapes.

This nonchalance of the anachronous image stands as an antithesis to the rapid gentrification and aggressive alleged community developments that the cities endure today: the digital images represent virtual two-dimensional echoes of what we had once witnessed as part of a cityscape. Of course, the image of a densely populated area will be promoted to its newer self more promptly than the one of the outskirts, and Google is dedicated to updating and obtaining new photographs across the planet, meanwhile analyzing, organizing and uploading the ones that have already been made. The lingering ghost-photographs you are consuming are not a priority, since there are still many locations waiting, unattended.

Discover places and change your view

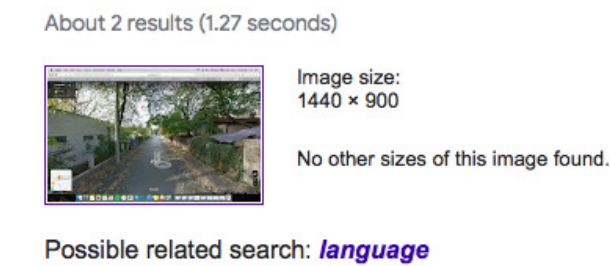
(Fig.2) Google Support

Construction sites become buildings overnight and residencies turn to scrapyards over just a few months. Nevertheless, their available, searchable images can be misleading, changed in a split second, and there is no way of keeping these places digitally safe other than with a screenshot, the last resort of cities' histories. Traveling through screens also means traveling through time.

The series of screenshots *Visible Cities* is a virtual walk-through chosen parts of Belgrade, which will never look this way again; through those parts that—at the moment of writing this text—already don't resemble their convenient image-doubles. These postcards, if you will, have been sent to our future selves, who can consume them until sudden replacement with novel ones. You cannot ask a Google car to reschedule in order to take a prettier or more up-to-date picture of a certain location, but you can request a Satellite Imagery update via Google Earth. However, when you include the phrase 'I would like to recommend an imagery refresh' in your quest for the truth, remember that this will leave behind an *invisible city*, undeniably more pixelated and less poetic than Calvino's.²

In Belgrade, as in many other cities, new Google labels for shops or restaurants exist in places that a satellite remembers as vast wetlands, while freshly built streets cannot be closely observed online. Little yellow man appointed by Street View is not available: the destinations you wish to drag him to are not yet recognized as boulevards by the camera eye. The prices of the apartments overlooking these districts are forcibly becoming higher, but one can find comfort in the gentle discrepancy

between what a satellite evokes and what the market dictates. The act of screenshotting is the act of securing this memory, a digital area reproduction in a given moment, whose immanent temporariness is what makes it alluring. Moreover, what makes screenshots appealing is the fact that you cannot further intervene—the embalmed city rests in the shape you wish to memorialize it.



(Fig.3) Google Search by Image

Feeding the memory card with images so that the *earlier* Belgrade remains traceable forever, made me curious in the end: I uploaded one of the screenshots to Reverse Image Search. The engine didn't find any visual results, but it associated the object with *language*. Screenshots are vernacular photographs, functional and numerous as ordinary snapshots³ but they are also social photographs⁴, since through this image-making device, now pointing to itself, we understand and share our experience. That being said, Google and I can agree on the fact that screenshots surely represent a language of sorts. In the *Visible Cities* series they are viewed as narratives of the past that people ignorantly refused to capture on camera, thinking that the mundane, ephemeral leisure of everyday life would never vanish. Same goes for me, who then desperately went for a virtual expedition in search of the not-yet-demolished historical buildings with

heritage protection status, inconspicuous catering facilities during their best days and tree alleys—now flourishing only online.

Cities and memory.

Cities and memory.

Cities and desire.

Cities and memory.

(Fig.4) Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

These great volumes of visual information are essentially hand-made, even though substantially platform-mediated. I never thought I would say it, but: *I produced a city* or even, *I curated a city*. And now—I *communicate a city*, beyond its architecture and infrastructure. There are *punctums*⁵ even in these quickly made and technically imperfect images: a waiter at the door of the now non-existing buffet or the bright color of the roses in a later devastated garden. The screenshots I made of these settings became the sole evidence of my city as it once was. Ultimately, they will make sure that in the digital realm the city remains visionary, if not visible.

Delete

This city will be deleted.

CANCEL DELETE

(Fig. 5) The Weather App

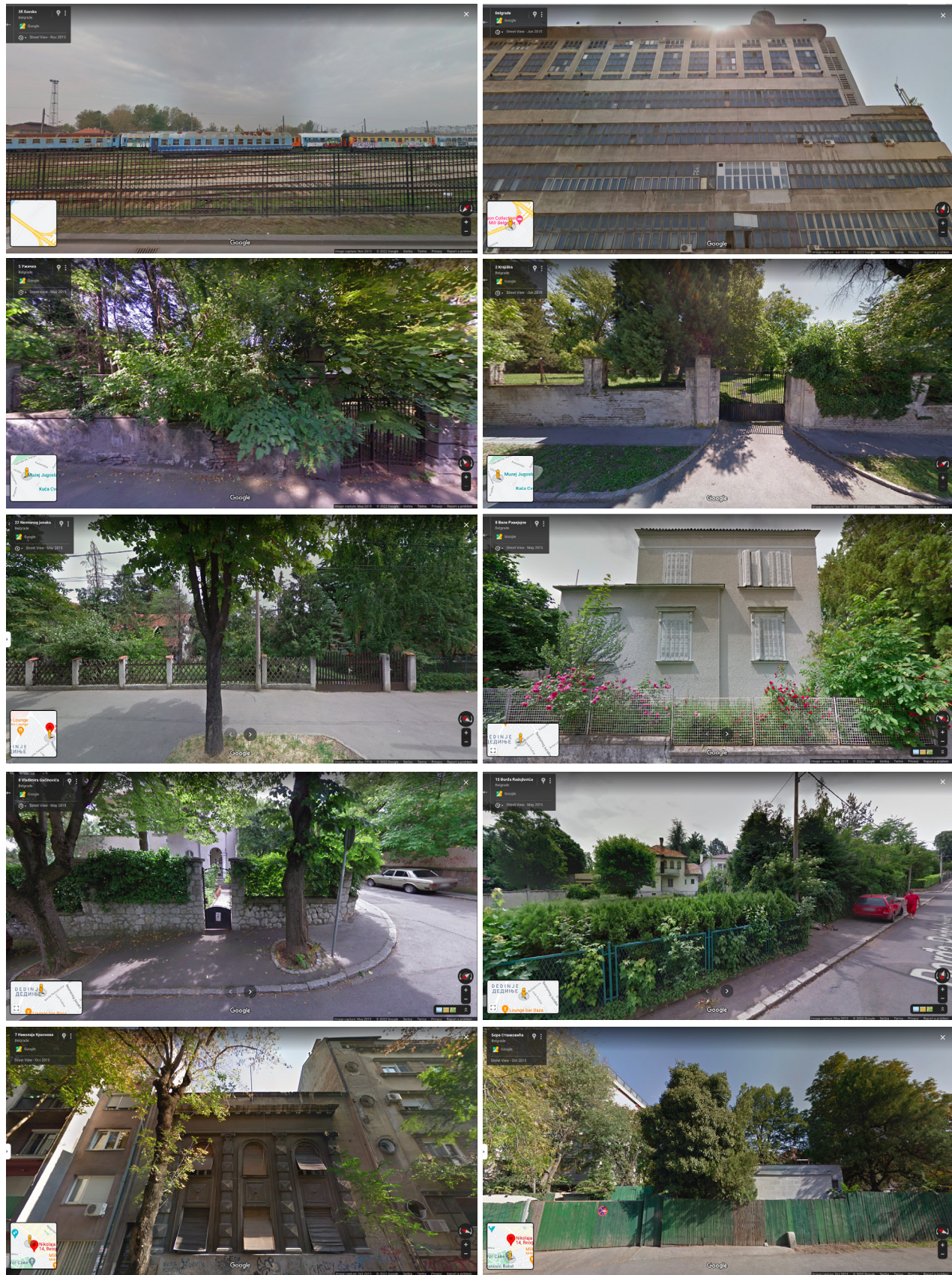
1 Kenneth Goldsmith, *Theory*, Paris: Jean Boîte Éditions, 2015.

2 Italo Calvino, 'The Invisible Cities', Complex and Sustainable Urban Networks laboratory, 27 January 2022, https://csun.uic.edu/publications/books/Calvino_1972_Invisible_Cities.pdf.

3 John Szarkowski, *The Photographer's Eye*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007.

4 Nathan Jurgenson, *The Social Photo: On Photography and Social Media*, New York: Verso Books, 2019.

5 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.



BIOGRAPHIES

Aisha Altenhofen is an artist and researcher based in Berlin with a background in Anthropology, Visual Cultures and Art History (Humboldt University Berlin/ Chulalongkorn University Bangkok). She is currently interested in image spheres, more-than-human perceptions and cartographies. At the moment, she studies Fine Arts at the University of Fine Arts in Berlin.

Chloë Arkenbout works as a researcher and editor at the Institute of Network Cultures. She has a background in both media studies and philosophy and is interested in the tactics marginalized people use to change oppressive discourses in the digital public sphere – from social media comment wars to memes. Arkenbout also co-edited the INC Critical Meme Reader. In addition, she works at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences where she teaches speculative design and she is also a member of the Research Ethics Committee. Next to this, she is involved with the Dutch political party BIJ1.

Nima Bahrehmand is an artist who creates video installations, performances, and technological outcomes. His art practice deals with the humanized world's aftermath. Nima investigates the capital desertifying operation that generates the repressions that will erupt in the future and impact the creation of the new. His artworks have been included in exhibitions and venues including Digital Native as part of Tbilisi Oxygen Biennial, Tbilisi; xCoAx, Graz; Aaran Gallery, Tehran; Kunstraum Potsdam, Berlin; Marres, Maastricht; Kiosk, Ghent; VAC, Austin and AG Gallery, Tehran; among others. Nima received his BFA in painting from the University of Kerman, Iran; MA from School of Art, Ghent, Belgium; and MFA in studio art, transmedia from the University of Texas at Austin. Nima is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Critical Media Practices at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Elisa Bergel Melo, born in Caracas in 1989, is a visual artist who uses photography as her main medium. She studied at the New England School of Photography (United States), GrisArt (Spain) and the Veritas University (Costa Rica). Her work begins at the idea of mobility; she is interested in thinking about distance as a malleable concept that can be reinterpreted through the traditional uses of photography, using its formats and means of reproduction as a methodology. Using archives (her own or found) as well as photographs taken without cameras, she develops installations, video sculptures and collages, which seek to reveal new intentions of the same content through accumulation and repetition. Bergel Melo has participated in multiple exhibitions in Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States, and most recently in the inaugural exhibition at the Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger in Basel. In addition, she has been part of international residency programs like SOMA Summer in 2016 in Mexico City. She currently lives and works in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Elki Boerdam is a visual artist and writer obsessed with the accumulation, circulation and consumption of digital images. In her practice, she uses images as her material, with the aim to empower them. She actively searches for digital images that are getting lost in the sea of smooth online content. Boerdam looks for the poor, the ugly, the random, the vague, the non-, and the incomprehensible image. Saving them and thus lifting them from invisibility by (re)arranging them, materializing them into paper, textile and returning them as digital entities. She also channels their thoughts into speculative stories written from the perspective of the image itself. In her current work, she researches how the random image can serve to fight predictive control and how images play a role in truth production systems of today.

Paolo Bruzzo was born in Genoa, Italy, in 1997. He is currently completing his master's degree in Emotion Technology at the University of Genoa. One of his main fields of interest is the emotional and cultural impact of memes and social networks in general. He has been active in content creation since 2011 and has first-hand experience by running several Facebook and Instagram pages, which have grown to reach tens or hundreds of thousands of people with each new post.

Lele Buonerba (b. 1995, Singapore) is an Italian graphic designer practicing in the contemporary arts field since 2017, working with both galleries and artists. Now based in Milan, Buonerba co-founded the micro-publishing house Have a Nice Day Press with his partner Laurel Hauge in 2019. Alongside editing, designing, and publishing artist's books, he is passionate about selecting music and DJs under the alias E-Musik.

Jessie Connell is an Irish artist based in the Netherlands. Currently pursuing a master's in theatre, they work across multiple disciplines including illustration, music, photography, and live performance. Primarily concerned with questions of gender, visibility, and unrepresentability, they're happiest lifting weights, dressing as a cowboy, and listening to Enya.

Ioanna Digenaki is a video + performance artist. While her practice is on making, she used transmedia storytelling, games, pseudo-science and the Internet, trying to explore the notions of melancholy in everyday life. She studied film at the School of Fine Arts in Thessaloniki, Greece. Born and raised in Athens, she currently lives in Berlin.

Rebecca Edwards has been the curator at arebyte Gallery since 2017. She curates the onsite exhibition programme at the space in East London, as well as the online programme at aos.arebyte.com. Her interests lie in cultivating new curatorial methods across

physical and digital space, interweaving fluid approaches to production, dissemination and representation of voices from artists working at the intersection of technology, online culture and new media. Other than arebyte, she has curated exhibitions at Ars Electronica, Off Site Project, The Royal College of Psychiatrists, The Zabłudowicz Collection and Lewisham Art House. She has written texts for The Zabłudowicz Collection (exhibition), LAS Berlin (exhibition), Curating Digital Art (book), +DEDE (exhibition), The Space Magazine (article), NEON Greece (exhibition), and all arebyte exhibition booklets.

César Escudero Andaluz is an artist focused on digital culture, interface criticism and their social and political effects. César's research addresses issues such as dataveillance, algorithm governance, tactical interfaces and critical mining. His practices combine interfaces, electronics, images, interactive installations and robotics with critical design, media archaeology and digital humanities. His artworks have been shown in international electronic-art events, museums and galleries including Ars Electronica (at) / ZKM (de) / Nam June Paik Center (sk) / WRO, Media Art Biennale in Wrocław (pl) / Science Gallery Detroit (usa) / HANGAR.ORG (es) / AKSIOMA(svn) / Chronus Art Center (chn) / AMRO (at) / NODE Forum for Digital Arts (de).

@lbert figurt is an Italian videoartisan, multi-instrumentalist and independent researcher / he excretes in the environment words, notes, images, crossmedia happenings and fuzzy thoughts / a member of the VideoVortex community since 2009, he's happily obsessed with the socio-anthropological & perceptual side effects of online video / in the past years he's been organizing Guerrilla Film-making and UGCadavre Exquis workshops, lecturing on Screencast Narratives and teaching American exchange students about Non-Linear Storytelling, Expanded VideoEditing and Digital Cultures.

Ben Grosser creates interactive experiences, machines, and systems that examine the cultural, social, and political effects of software. Recent exhibition venues include the Barbican Centre in London, Museum Kesselhaus in Berlin, Museu das Comunicações in Lisbon, and Galerie Charlot in Paris. His works have been featured in *The New Yorker*, *Wired*, *The Atlantic*, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *El País*, *Libération*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and *Der Spiegel*. The *Chicago Tribune* called him the “unrivaled king of ominous gibberish.” *Slate* referred to his work as “creative civil disobedience in the digital age.” Grosser’s artworks are regularly cited in books investigating the cultural effects of technology, including *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, *The Metainterface*, *Critical Code Studies*, and *Technologies of Vision*, as well as volumes centered on computational art practices such as *Electronic Literature*, *The New Aesthetic and Art*, and *Digital Art*. Grosser is an associate professor in the School of Art + Design, and co-founder of the Critical Technology Studies Lab at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, both at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.

Gottfried Haider is an artist, educator, and software tool builder. He received a degree in Digital Arts from the University of Applied Arts in Vienna in 2009, and an MFA from the Design Media Arts program at UCLA in 2013. He has participated in numerous exhibitions and media art festivals internationally. He currently works as an Assistant Arts Professor at NYU Shanghai.

Laurel Hauge (b. 1994, Phoenix, AZ) is a visual artist and writer living in Milan, Italy. She has been included in group exhibitions at the Center for Book and Paper Arts, Chicago, IL; the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, New York, NY; and most recently in the second edition of ReA! Art Fair in Milan, Italy. In 2020 she had a solo show at North Pole Exhibitions, Chicago, IL. She is the co-founder of Have a Nice Day Press and her writings have been

included in *Color Tag Magazine*, *The Lab Review*, and *SoapOpera Fanzine*.

Roc Herms, born in 1978, discovers photography at 28 as a tool to learn and combine it with his interest in the Internet, video games and parallel realities. Showing his passion for technology and the need to take a step further in photographic practice. “Postcards From Home” and “<YO> <YO> <YO>”, his two long term projects published in book form, try to shed some light on the life we live inside the computer. “Hacer Pantallazo” is an intimate diary made with screenshots, a capture process that he ends up understanding as the ultimate step on photography’s digitalisation.

Josh Kimball started screenshots of despair in 2012.

Nicole Kouts (São Paulo, Brazil, 1997) is a multimedia artist and researcher. She investigates the multidisciplinary of images as a transport medium of ancient beliefs to contemporary technologies; ghosts of the divine, the self and the infinity in luminous digital portals and obsolete analog media. She is a bachelor in Visual Arts, with a Postgraduate Degree in Scenography and Costume Design (Centro Universitário Belas Artes de São Paulo). Her work has participated in festivals and exhibitions, in loco and online, in more than 20 countries. (www.nicolekouts.com)

Olia Lialina Born in Moscow. Net Artist, one of the net.art pioneers, animated GIF model. Co-founder of Geocities Research Institute and keeper of One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age Archive. Writes on New Media, Digital Folklore, Vernacular Web and Human Computer Interaction. Professor for new media and interface design at Merz Akademie, Stuttgart. **@GIFmodel**

Iu is an architect from belgrade. she studied in strasbourg, lived in paris and went back to belgrade where from she is now doing a phd about the digital in architecture. her interests are scifi blockbusters, urbanism and neuroscience. slightly insecure about the present she is obsessed with the future while dwelling on the past just enough to undermine the contemporary temporality. still loving everyone she ever loved, she has dogs and dreams of cats.

Gabriel Menotti is Assistant Professor at the Film & Media Department of Queen’s University. He works as an independent curator and has written extensively on moving image practices. His most recent books are “Movie Circuits: Curatorial Approaches to Cinema Technology” (AUP, 2019) and “Practices of Projection: Histories and Technologies” (OUP, 2020, edited with Virginia Crisp). Menotti is also one of the coordinators of the Besides the Screen festival and research network, and currently convenes Museum Without Walls, a curatorial survey on virtual museums.

Maxwell Neely-Cohen is the author of the novel *Echo of the Boom*. His nonfiction and essays have been featured in places like *BOMB Magazine*, *The New Republic*, and *Ssense*. From 2018-2021, he was Editor-At-Large for *The Believer*. He was most recently in residence at Pioneer Works, CultureHub, and ENGINE.

Dunja Nešović is a new media enthusiast and researcher, originally from Belgrade. She finished an rMA in Critical Studies in Art and Culture at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in 2021. After falling into several rabbit holes on TikTok, she decided to make it her point of expertise. At the moment, she’s pondering the strategies of clawing herself out of filter bubbles.

Yoana Pavlova is a France-based Bulgarian writer, critic, curator, independent researcher, and sporadically an artist. Founder of *Festivalists.com*, a platform for experimental

media criticism, she also explores digital arts and culture in the form of text, visuals, and through analogue materials. Mentor at various European programs for aspiring film critics and journalists, she has been collaborating with CinEd.eu in the field of media literacy for children and youth in school since 2018.

Ulrich Richtmeyer studied liberal arts at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and philosophy at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, where he wrote his doctoral thesis on Kant’s aesthetics in the age of photography (2006). After research stays at Eikones in Basel and at IKKM Weimar, he completed his postdoctoral qualification in 2016 on Wittgenstein’s visual thinking. Since 2017 he is professor of media culture at the University of Applied Sciences Potsdam. Current research on screenshots will be published in: *‘The “Movement of Doubt” in Screenshot Photography’*, in Baruch Gottlieb, Katerina Krtilova, Ulrich Richtmeyer (eds) *We Can No Longer Philosophize in Text as We Had Before, We Must Try It with Images*, Den Haag: WEST, 2022 (in forthcoming).

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